

a *Grace Notes* publication

Genesis

an expositional Bible study by
Pastor William E. Wenstrom, Jr.
Wenstrom Bible Ministries
<http://www.wenstrom.org>

Edited by Warren Doud

Grace Notes, 1705 Aggie Lane, Austin, Texas 78757

Copyright 2002, William E. Wenstrom, Jr. Bible Ministries

Genesis

by Pastor William E. Wenstrom

Table of Contents

Introduction to Genesis	5
Genesis 1	10
Genesis 2	25
Genesis 3	39
Genesis 4	56
Genesis 5	64
Genesis 6	67
Genesis 7	81
Genesis 8	90
Genesis 9	99
Genesis 10	108
Genesis 11	123
Genesis 12	151
Genesis 13	170
Genesis 14	183
Genesis 15	198
Genesis 16	210
Genesis 17	224
Genesis 18	234
Genesis 19	247
Genesis 20	266
Genesis 21	279
Genesis 22	299
Genesis 23	324
Genesis 24	334
Genesis 25	366
Genesis 26	389
Genesis 27	411

Genesis 28	427
Genesis 29	442
Genesis 30	465
Genesis 31	483
Genesis 32	509
Genesis 33	547
Genesis 34	560
Genesis 35	577
Genesis 36	600
Genesis 37	614
Genesis 38	647
Genesis 39	668
Genesis 40	691
Genesis 41	702
Genesis 42	740
Genesis 43	758
Genesis 44	775
Genesis 45	784
Genesis 46	810
Genesis 47	828
Genesis 48	845
Genesis 49	859
Genesis 50	880

The Author

William E. Wenstrom, Jr. is the pastor of Wenstrom Bible Ministries in Marion, Iowa. In 1998, he was ordained by Pastor Robert McLaughlin of Grace Bible Church in Somerset, Massachusetts. Pastor Wenstrom has written over seven hundred articles pertaining to various theological subjects, Biblical figures, and Greek word studies. He also has expositions on Genesis, 1 John, Ephesians, Philippians, Romans, Jonah, and 1 Timothy.

Pastor Wenstrom teaches his congregation based on the original languages of Scripture in the light of the historical context in which the Bible was written. He has recorded more than a thousand hours of lectures. In addition, he is an accomplished musician- writing, composing, and performing his own original Christian music.

Grace Notes

Grace Notes is a Bible study ministry which began in 1994 using the Internet to distribute lessons and articles to people who are interested in God's Word. Thousands of Christians, in more than 110 countries around the world, have received Grace Notes lessons on the Internet, by E-mail and the World Wide Web. All courses and materials are distributed free of charge, and the work is supported by believers who want to see the ministry continue and grow. Grace Notes studies are also distributed on diskette and CD-ROM in order to reach those who do not have Internet access.

Verse-by-verse courses are available in more than 30 books of the Bible. Some of the courses include word studies (categorical doctrine) or historical articles (isagogics) that are relevant to the passages being discussed. Other courses offered are Bible character studies, comprehensive studies of the Christian Life and Basics of the Christian Life, an extensive series on the Person and Word of Jesus Christ, and a thorough study of the Attributes of God. You are invited to write to the address below, or write by e-mail, to inquire about Grace Notes materials.

Warren Doud, Director
1705 Aggie Lane, Austin, Texas 78757

E-Mail: wdoud@gracenotes.info

Web Site: <http://www.gracenotes.info>

Introduction to Genesis

One of the most profound, controversial and misunderstood books of the Bible is that of Genesis. In fact, Satan has attacked the book of Genesis more than any other book in the Bible. Why? Knowing that Genesis sets forth the intervention of God in Satan's kingdom, Satan is especially bitter in his attacks upon its pages.

Satan's hatred of the Scriptures is evident in many ways. Every attack upon the Bible may be known to originate from him. He will use any arm or instrument to belittle the veracity and authenticity of the Scriptures.

If Satan can get men to disbelieve in the record of the 1st lines in the Bible in the book of Genesis, then he can get them to disbelieve in the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

The book of Genesis is in the foundation of God's revelation, as given in the original languages of Scripture. No other book of the Bible is quoted as copiously or referred to so frequently in other books of the Bible, as is Genesis.

In the Old Testament, for example, Adam is mentioned by name in the books Deuteronomy, Job and 1 Chronicles and Noah is mentioned in 1 Chronicles, Isaiah and Ezekiel. Abraham is mentioned by name in 15 different books of the Old Testament and 11 of the New. Jacob is named in 20 books of the Old Testament and in at least 17 of the New Testament.

In a special sense, every mention of the people or nation of Israel is an implicit acknowledgement of the foundational authority of Genesis, since Israel was the new name given to Jacob and his sons became the 12 tribes of Israel. Apart from the book of Genesis, there is no explanation for Israel, nor consequently for all the rest of the Old Testament.

The New Testament is, if anything, even more dependent on Genesis than the Old. There are at least 165 passages in Genesis that are either directly quoted or clearly referred to in the New Testament. Many of these are alluded to more than once, so that there are at least 200 quotations or allusions to Genesis in the New Testament. It is impossible for one to reject the historicity and

divine authority of the book of Genesis without undermining and in effect, repudiating, the authority of the entire Bible. The book of Genesis establishes the divine unity of the Bible.

The book of Genesis tells of the origin of all things and the book of Revelation reveals the destiny of all things. Genesis 3:15 is the prediction out of which the rest of prophecy has been developed.

Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

The entire New Testament in its doctrinal statements rests upon this book. If the 1st Adam is only an allegory, then by all logic, so is the 2nd Adam. If man did not really fall into sin from his state of created perfection, there is no reason for him to need a Savior. If all things can be accounted for by natural processes of evolution, there is no reason to look forward to a future supernatural consummation of all things.

If Genesis is not true, then neither are the testimonies of those prophets and apostles who believed it was true. Jesus Christ Himself becomes a false prophet and witness, either a deceiver or one who is was deceived and His testimony concerning His own omniscience and omnipotence becomes blasphemy. Faith in the Gospel of Christ for one's salvation is an empty mockery.

The book of Genesis is written as divinely inspired account of the origin of all things. The title "Genesis" is a transliteration of the Greek word, which is the title of the book of Genesis in the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament.

The phrase "in the beginning" is composed of the preposition *en*, "in," and the noun *res'shith*, "eternity past." The word *genesis* of course means "origin," and the book of Genesis gives the only true and reliable account of the origin of all the basic entities of the universe and of life.

Traditionally, Moses has been held to be the author of Genesis over the centuries. A number of inferential evidences favor this conclusion. It would appear from a number of passages (e.g., Exodus 17:14; 24:4; 34:27; Leviticus 1:1; 4:1;

6:1,8,19,24; 7:22,28, etc.) that Moses wrote the other books of the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy).

It would indeed be unusual for the first word of Exodus to be “and” unless Moses wrote it as well. In the New Testament, our Lord seemingly attributes the Pentateuch to Moses (Matt 8:4; 19:7,8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:3,4; Luke 5:14; 16:29,31; John 5:45,46; 7:22,23). Other New Testament writers follow this same approach (Acts 3:22, 13:39; Rom 10:5,19; I Cor 9:9; II Cor 3:15). It is therefore hard not to conclude that Moses wrote all the Pentateuch, in spite of no one air tight statement to this effect.

Critics have not been content with this conclusion, however. Beginning with J. Astruc (1753), “scholars” have attributed this book to the work of an unknown redactor who skillfully compiled the writings of four or more editors.

Generally the four primary sources are referred to as J, E, D, and P. J is the “Yahwist”; E, the “Elohist”; D is the work of the Deuteronomist; and P, the priestly document.

Several lines of evidence are given to support the Graf Wellhausen or Documentary hypothesis.

First would be the different names, which are employed for God. For those who hold to the Documentary hypothesis, the change from Elohim to Yahweh signals a change of author.

One major flaw in this approach is that within “E” passages the word Yahweh is also employed (e.g. Genesis 22:11, 14; 28:17 22) and vice versa.

Secondly, we are pointed to different expressions referring to the same act, such as that of making a covenant.

“Cut a covenant,” “give a covenant,” and “establish a covenant” are variously employed, by the different authors of the Pentateuch.

This leaves the author with no opportunity for stylistic change or for a change in the nuance of a word. One would hate to write under such restrictions today.

Thirdly, we are told that the Pentateuch contains “doublets,” that is duplicate accounts of the same event. One such instance would be the two

creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2. Worse yet are supposed “doublets” where there is any semblance of similarity between two accounts, such as Hagar’s two departures from home (Genesis 16, 21). While multiple authorship or the use of existing documents should pose no great difficulty to the doctrine of the Bible’s inspiration and inerrancy, the Documentary hypothesis stands condemned on two counts.

First, it is based upon the very thin ice of conjecture of scholars who are supposedly better informed than the author(s) of old; and secondly, it has placed most of the emphasis upon the isolation of fragments and their authors, rather than upon the interpretation of the text itself. They are more concerned about an alleged Redactor, than the Redeemer.

Now, nearly every student of the book of Genesis agrees that it falls logically into two sections: Chapters 1 11 and 12 50. The first eleven chapters focus upon the ever widening ruin of man, fallen from his created perfection and coming under the judgment of the Creator. Chapters 12 50 describe God’s ever-narrowing program of man’s redemption.

The first division of the book, Chapters 1 11, can be summarized by four major events: (1) the creation (Chapters 1 2), (2) the fall (Chapters 3 5), (3) the flood (Chapters 6 9), (4) the confusion of languages of the tower of Babel (Chapter 11).

The last division of Genesis, chapters 12 50, can be remembered by its four main characters: Abraham (12:1 25:18), Isaac (25:19 26:35), Jacob (27 36), and Joseph (37 50).

The book of Genesis can also be divided according to the genealogies, i.e., according to the families:

Gen. 1-2:6: Book of Generations of Heavens and Earth

Gen. 2:7-6:8: Book of Generations of Adam

Gen. 6:9-9:29: Generations of Noah

Gen. 10:1-11:9: Generations of Sons of Noah

Gen. 11:10-26: Generations of Sons of Shem

Gen. 11:27-25:11: Generations of Terah

Gen. 25:12-18: Generations of Ishmael

Gen. 25:19-35:29: Generations of Isaac

Gen. 36:1-37:1: Generations of Esau

Gen. 37:2-50:26: Generations of Jacob

Genesis is also particularly crucial in the light of the doctrine of progressive revelation. This doctrine attempts to define the phenomena, which occurs in the process of divine revelation. Essentially initial revelation is general while subsequent revelation tends to be more particular and specific. Let me try to illustrate progressive revelation by an examination of the doctrine of redemption.

The first promise of redemption is definite but largely undefined in

Genesis 3:15: "He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Later in Genesis we learn that the world will be blessed through Abraham (12:3).

Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

The line through which Messiah would come was through Isaac, not Ishmael; Jacob, not Esau.

Finally in Genesis we see that Israel's coming ruler will be of the tribe of Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples" (Genesis 49:10).

Later on we learn that Messiah will be the offspring of David (II Samuel 7:14-16), to be born in the city of Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).

2 Sam 7:14-16, "I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

Micah 5:2, "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of

Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

Literally hundreds of prophecies tell in greater detail, the coming of the Messiah. The striking realization is that Genesis (and the Pentateuch) contains the broad outlines of virtually every major area of theology. For those of us who tend to lose our sense of perspective between fundamental and incidental truths, a study of Genesis will tend to remind us of those areas of theology, which are most fundamental and foundational.

Genesis also sheds light on contemporary events. The bitter struggle, which is currently going on in the Middle East, is explained in the book of Genesis. Abram, who wanted to help God along with His plan, took matters into his own hands. The result was the birth of a child to Sarai's handmaid, Hagar. The Arabs of today claim to have descended from Ishmael.

How one approaches the book of Genesis largely determines what they will get from its study. I would like to mention three methods of interpretation, which we must avoid. Neo orthodox theologians are willing to grant that the Bible contains truth, but will not go so far as to accept it as the truth. They suspect that throughout its transmission down through the ages it has become something less than inspired and inerrant. These untrue accretions, which have become mixed with biblical truth, must be exposed and expunged. This process is referred to as demythologizing Scripture.

The great difficulty is that man determines what is truth and what is fiction. Man is no longer under the authority of the Word, but is the authority over the Word.

A second method of interpretation is called the allegorical approach. This method is barely one step removed from demythologizing. The biblical account is not nearly so important as the "spiritual" message conveyed by the passage. The difficulty is that the "spiritual message" seems to differ with every individual, and it is not tied in with the historical grammatical interpretation of the text. In popular group studies this usually fits under the heading of "what this verse means to

me.” The interpretation of a text should be the same for a housewife or a theologian, a child or a mature Christian. The application may differ, but the interpretation, never!

Closely related to the allegorical method of interpretation is the typological approach. No one questions that the Bible contains types. Some of these types are clearly designated as such in the New Testament (Rom 5:14; Col 2:17; Heb 8:5, etc.).

Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

Col 2:18, “things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Heb 8:5, “who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, just as Moses was warned by God when he was about to erect the tabernacle; for, “SEE,” He says, “THAT YOU MAKE all things ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN WHICH WAS SHOWN YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN.”

Other types can hardly be questioned, while not specifically labeled as such. For example, Joseph seems to be a clear type of Christ. Oftentimes people have “found” types where they seem not to exist. While the meaning of such interpretation may be one that conforms to Scripture (or may be taught elsewhere), there is no way to prove or disprove the type. The more one is so-called spiritual, the more types he or she seems to find. And who can question them? But in this search for types, the plain and simple interpretation is obscured or overlooked. Let us exercise great caution here.

I would like to suggest that we approach the book of Genesis as the book presents itself to us. We must let the Bible speak for itself and not put words in God’s mouth.

Genesis 1:1

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

This statement in Genesis 1:1 is authoritative and declarative. The claim implied by this verse is much like that of our Lord when He presented Himself to men. No one can logically tip their hat to Jesus Christ as a “good man,” “a wonderful example,” or a “great teacher,” He was either Who He claimed to be (the Messiah, the Son of God), or He was a fake and a fraud. There is no middle ground, no riding the fence with Jesus. Jesus does not deserve mere courtesy. He demands a crown or a cross. So it is with this verse. We dare not call it good literature. It claims authority and veracity. From this verse one should either read on, expecting a revelation from God in this book, or he should set it aside as mere religious rhetoric.

Let us remember that no one witnessed the creation:

Job 38:4-7, “Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell Me, if you have understanding, who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it? Or where were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

There are only two viable options as to where Genesis 1:1 (and the rest of the book) came from. Either it was a product of a human author’s imagination, or it is divinely revealed truth. If it is the former, we should value it only as a work of antiquity, on the same level as other ancient cosmogonies. If the latter, we must come on bended knee, willing to hear and obey it as an authoritative word from God. This view of Genesis as divine revelation, the historical account of our origins, is that of the remainder of the Scriptures.

Psalms 136:5-9, “To Him who made the heavens with skill, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who spread out the earth above the waters, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; to Him who made the great Lights, for His lovingkindness is everlasting; the sun to rule by day, for His lovingkindness is everlasting, the moon and stars to rule by night, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.”

Isa 45:7-19, "The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these. Drip down, O heavens, from above, And let the clouds pour down righteousness; Let the earth open up and salvation bear fruit, And righteousness spring up with it. I, the LORD, have created it. Woe to the one who quarrels with his Maker -- An earthenware vessel among the vessels of earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands'? "Woe to him who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?' Or to a woman, 'To what are you giving birth?'" Thus says the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker: "Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, And you shall commit to Me the work of My hands. It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands And I ordained all their host. I have aroused him in righteousness And I will make all his ways smooth; He will build My city and will let My exiles go free, Without any payment or reward," says the LORD of hosts. Thus says the LORD, "The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush And the Sabeans, men of stature, Will come over to you and will be yours; They will walk behind you, they will come over in chains And will bow down to you; They will make supplication to you: 'Surely, God is with you, and there is none else, No other God.' Truly, You are a God who hides Himself, O God of Israel, Savior! They will be put to shame and even humiliated, all of them; The manufacturers of idols will go away together in humiliation. Israel has been saved by the LORD With an everlasting salvation; You will not be put to shame or humiliated To all eternity. For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place, But formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else. I have not spoken in secret, In some dark land; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek Me in a waste place'; I, the LORD, speak

righteousness, Declaring things that are upright."

The book of Genesis tells us that it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being quite deceived, fell into transgression (I Tim 2:13-14; cf. also Matt 19:4-6; Rom 5:14f).

1 Tim 2:13-14, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression."

Matt 19:4-6, "And He answered and said, 'Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

Rom 5:12-14, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come."

We will therefore come to the book of Genesis as divine revelation. 2 Tim 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Peter 1:20-21, "But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

In interpreting the book of Genesis, we will adhere to the following hermeneutical principles in interpreting every book of the Bible: (1) Isagogics: Interpreting the Bible in its historical setting. (2) Categories: Classification of Biblical doctrine according to its subject, i.e. comparing Scripture

with Scripture in regards to a particular Biblical subject. (3) Exegesis: Grammatical, syntactical, etymological interpretation of Scripture from its original language.

The book of Genesis is an extremely important book because it gives us information regarding the following:

- Origin of the universe
- Origin of order and complexity: Order and complexity never arise spontaneously but rather are generated by a prior cause programmed to produce such order.
- Origin of the solar system
- Origin of the atmosphere and hydrosphere
- Origin of life
- Origin of man
- Origin of the total depravity of man
- Origin of marriage
- Origin of evil
- Origin of language
- Origin of government
- Origin of culture
- Origin of nations
- Origin of religion
- Origin of the chosen people (Israel).

Genesis 1

The naming of the book of Genesis is in conformity with the ancient Near East practice of naming a book by its first words, the Hebrew title of the book of Genesis is *b^ere'shith* (jyv!ar@B+), "in the beginning."

On the other hand, the English title is a transliteration from the Latin Vulgate (*Liber Genesis*) of the Greek title, probably taken from 2:4, *genesis*, "origin, source, race, creation"). Both titles are appropriate for the book of Genesis deals with beginnings and origins of the cosmos (1:1-2:3), of humanity, the nations and their alienation from God and one another (2:4-11:32) and of Israel (12:1-50:26), God's new initiative to save

the world through the promised "Seed", the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible attributes the authorship of the Pentateuch to Moses, and if so, then the book of Genesis was authored by Moses since Genesis is contained in the Pentateuch (Ex. 20:2-23:33; 34:11-26; Lev. 1:1; 27:34; Deut. 1:5-4:40; 5:1-26:19; 27-28; 31:30-32:43).

The prologue of the book of Genesis is contained in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and from there the book of Genesis is divided according to the genealogies that are marked by the noun *toledhoth* (pronounced: toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T}), which means, "origins, records of the origins"

The noun *toledhoth* appears ten times in the book of Genesis and is always used in a transitional sense as a heading or title for what is to follow and provides the outline or framework to the book of Genesis.

Therefore, the outline of the book of Genesis is as follows:

The account of the line of the heavens and the earth-transition (2:4-4:26).

The account of Adam's line (5:1-6:8).

The account of Noah's line (6:9-9:29).

The account of the line of Noah's sons (10:1-11:9).

The account of Shem's line (11:10-26).

The account of Terah's line (11:27-25:11).

The account of Ishmael's line (25:1-11).

The account of Isaac's line (25:19-35:29).

The account of Esau's line (36:1-37:1).

The account of Jacob's line (37:2-50:26).

The book of Genesis is an extremely important book because it gives us information regarding the origins of the universe, the solar system, the atmosphere, life, man, the total depravity of man, marriage, evil, language, government, culture, the nations, religion, the chosen people (Israel).

Genesis 1:1

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Corrected translation of Genesis 1:1, “In eternity past, God created out of nothing the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1 refutes (1) *Atheism* because God created the universe. (2) *Pantheism* for God is transcendent to that which He created. (3) *Polytheism* for one God created all things. (4) *Materialism* for matter had a beginning. (5) *Dualism* because God was alone when He created. (6) *Humanism* because God, not man, is the ultimate reality. (7) *Evolutionism* because God created all things.

“**In the beginning**” refers to eternity past when there was only the Trinity and no creation or creatures.

“**Created**” is the verb *bara* (ar*B*), “to create something out of nothing” which is in Genesis 1:1 and is not used until the introduction of animal and human life, in the 5th and 6th days indicating that the six days are an account of a divine restoration.

The other verbs which are used to describe the work of the 6 days such as “**made**,” (*asah*), “**form**” (*yatsar*) “**divide**” (*badhal*), and “**set**” (*nathan*) are used elsewhere of work done with existing materials, thus clearly indicating that something tremendous and terrible happened to the initial creation.

“Creation” is different from “restoration” since the former is making something out of nothing whereas the latter is fixing something up after it has been destroyed.

God the Father planned the restoration, God the Son gave the commands to create and restore (Gen. 1:21, 27; Heb. 1:2) and God the Holy Spirit executed God the Son’s commands to restore and create (Gen. 1:2b-20).

Colossians 1:16, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities -- all things have been created through Him and for Him.”

Evolution is taught in our schools as an alternative to the creation account that is taught in the Bible, but it takes more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe the Biblical account of creation.

There are three essential areas into which evolution cannot move and which evolution cannot solve:

- (1) It cannot bridge the gap from nothing to something.
- (2) It cannot bridge the gap from something to life.
- (3) It cannot bridge the gap between life and humanity—that is self-conscious human life with a volition.

Genesis 1:2a

“The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 1:2a, “However the earth became an empty desolation, and darkness was upon the surface of the raging ocean depths.”

Genesis 1:2 begins with a “*waw*-disjunctive construction” (conjunction-noun-verb), which indicates a contrast between Genesis 1:2 and 1:1 and that the original creation underwent a catastrophic judgment.

Now, we know that God is perfect and His creation of the heavens and the earth was perfect, thus what we read in Genesis 1:2 indicates that something happened to God’s perfect creation.

“**Was**” is the verb *hayah*, which is in the perfect tense referring to the present state of the earth that is the result of a preceding situation, namely, the judgment of the fallen angels and should be translated “**became**.”

“**Formless and void**” is composed of 3 Hebrew words: (1) “**Formless**” is the noun *tohu*. (2) “**And**” is the conjunction *waw*. (3) “**Void**” is the noun *bohu*.

The noun *tohu* signifies “desolation, that which is desolate, a chaos, a ruin” whereas the noun *bohu* means “emptiness,” or “that which is empty.” *Tohu* and *bohu* always refer to a confused, chaotic state, inevitably the result of some cataclysm, and usually one that has been brought on by divine judgment.

Isaiah 45:18, “For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is the God who

formed the earth and made it, He established it and did not create it a waste place (tohu), but formed it to be inhabited), "I am the LORD, and there is none else."

Jeremiah 4:23, "I looked on the earth, and behold, it was a ruin (tohu) and a desolation (bohu); And to the heavens, and they had no light."

In Genesis 1:2, the nouns *tohu*, *bohu* express the concept of chaos on the earth and a comparison of Scripture with Scripture indicates that this was the result of God's judgment of the Satanic rebellion.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 along with a comparison of Scripture with Scripture (cf. Isa. 45:18; Jer. 4:23-25; Ezek. 28:12-18; Isa. 14:12-14) clearly indicates that the earth and all of creation have already undergone 3 phases: (1) Creation (Gen. 1:1). (2) Chaos (Between Gen. 1:1 and 1:2; cf. Isa. 14:12-14; 45:18; Ezek. 28:12-18; Job 4:18). (3) Restoration and Creation of Mankind (Gen. 1:2b-2:4).

The six days recorded in Genesis 1:3-31 are a record of the restoration of the original creation that was judged by God for the rebellion of Satan and this restoration was accomplished in 6 literal 24-hour days: (1) 1st Day: The Lord restored light to the earth (Gen. 1:3-5). (2) 2nd Day: The Lord restored the atmosphere (Gen. 1:6-8). (3) 3rd Day: The Lord restored the dry land by causing the flood waters to gather into one place (Gen. 1:9-11). (4) 4th Day: The Lord restored the stellar universe (Gen. 1:14-19). (5) 5th Day: The Lord created animal life (Gen. 1:20-21). (6) 6th Day: The Lord created man (Gen. 1:26-28).

The presence of the heavens and earth *already* in place at Genesis 1:3 shows this is restoration.

Three major events took place between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2:

(1) The rebellion of Satan in eternity past, which is noted in Job 4:18, Isaiah 14:12-14, 45:18 and Ezekiel 28:12-18.

Job 4:18, "He puts no trust even in His servants; And against His angels He charges error."

Ezekiel 28:12, 13

"Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, "Thus says the Lord GOD, you had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty."

"You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared."

The fact that Satan was in the garden of Eden before he sinned and rebelled against God indicates that the garden of Eden that Adam was placed in was a restored one and if a restored one then the account of the six days of Genesis 1 are that of a restoration rather than one of creation.

Ezekiel 28:14-19

"You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire."

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you."

"By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you."

"By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you."

"All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; You have become terrified and you will cease to be forever."

Isaiah 14:12-14

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!”

“But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.’”

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

The fact that Satan desired to ascend to heaven indicates that he was not satisfied with his position on planet earth in the garden of Eden and if he was in the garden of Eden, then the garden of Eden that Adam was placed into was a restored one and if it was restored, then the account of the six days in Genesis 1 are an account of a restoration and not of creation.

(2) The Supreme Court of Heaven’s decision to sentence Satan and the fallen angels to the Lake of Fire for their rebellion as noted in Matthew 25:41.

(3) The appeal of the sentence by Satan, which is indicated by the following:

(a) Satan is the god of this world (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2),

(b) he deceives it (1 Jn. 5:19),

(c) he has access to heaven and accuses believers (Job 1-2; Zech. 3:1-3; Rev. 12:10),

(d) his sentence to the lake of fire has not been executed as of yet and won’t be until the end of human history (Rev. 20:10).

Genesis 1:2

“The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.”

The earth enshrouded in darkness indicates that the earth was judged by God since darkness in the Bible is always associated with judgment, sin and evil (cf. Is.5:30; 8:22; Ezek.32:7-8; Acts 13:11; Ex.10:21-29; cf. Ps.105:28; Matt.27:45-54; Rev.19:20; 20:10, 14-15; 21:8).

The earth being completely flooded with water indicates that the earth was judged by God since water is commonly associated with judgment (Gen. 6-9; cf. 2 Pet.2:5; 3:5-7).

As a result of Satan's activities on the original earth, God judged the original created world and the earth was cursed by association with Satan's sin (just as the restored earth would later be cursed for its association with Adam's sin (Gen.3:17-19; Rom. 8:19-22).

At the end of Genesis 1:2, we have the Holy Spirit anticipating the command from the Lord Jesus Christ to restore physical light to the stellar universe and planet earth, which would indicate the restoration of the presence and glory of God and that God granted Satan and the fallen angels there appeal.

Corrected translation of Genesis 1:2b, “Now, the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.

“**Was moving**” is the piel stem of the verb *rachaph* ([j^r*]), which is used as an anthropomorphism where God the Holy Spirit is depicted as hovering over the raging ocean depths of planet earth like a mother eagle hovering over her chicks in order to convey God’s attitude of concern for His creation, which was judged because of the Satanic rebellion. The word speaks of the mercy and grace of God who as to His nature is love.

Genesis 1:3

“Then God (the Son) said (amar, “to command”), "Let there be light"; and there was light.”

In response to the command given to Him by God the Son, God the Holy Spirit restored physical light to the stellar universe and planet earth, which signifies the presence of God just as darkness indicates the absence of God’s presence.

1 John 1:5 states that “**God is light**,” which is a figure for the holiness of God and John 4:23-24 teaches that “**God is spirit**” and thus invisible.

Psalm 104:2 teaches that God covers Himself in light as a garment and ...

1 Timothy 6:16 states that He “dwells in unapproachable light.” Therefore, a comparison of these passages indicates that God who is holy choosing to manifest Himself by a great display of light.

In Genesis 1:3, light is used literally for physical light, whose source is the manifestation of the presence and glory of God.

Nowhere is Scripture is light said to be *bara*, “created out of nothing,” but it is said to be *yatsar*, “to formed out of existing material, i.e. restored.”

Isaiah 45:7, “The One Who forms (*yatsar*, “to form out of existing material” and not *bara*) light and the Creator (*bara*, “to create out of non-existing material”) of darkness, the Maker of prosperity and the Creator of misfortune, I, the Lord, the One who performs all these things.”

Light was formed or crafted out of existing material in order that God might manifest His presence before angels and men.

We do not have a full manifestation of light in creation at the present time because of the presence of sin and evil in both heaven and earth. There will be a full manifestation of light in the new heavens and the new earth, whose appearance will be subsequent to human history, which will end when the appeal of Satan is complete (Rev. 21). There will be no darkness in the new heavens and new earth because all remembrance of angelic and human sin and rebellion will not be present but will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev. 21).

This restoration of physical light to the stellar universe and planet earth indicated that God was graciously granting Satan his appeal.

Genesis 1:4

“God (the Son) saw that the light was good; and God separated (*badhal*, “to cause a division”) the light from the darkness.”

“Saw” is the verb *ra’ah*, which means, “to observe” in the sense that the Lord Jesus Christ *considered carefully* the restoration of light to the stellar universe by the Holy Spirit was picture perfect.

Ra’ah is used in an anthropopathic sense meaning that the human action of seeing is attributed to infinite eternal God in order to communicate to our finite human frame of reference God’s acceptance and approval of the restoration of light to the stellar universe, which would fulfill His purposes in granting Satan his appeal.

“**Good**” is the predicate adjective *tov*, which is used to describe the work of Holy Spirit in restoring physical light to the stellar universe from the standpoint of “exactly fitting the needs of the Trinity and purpose” in granting Satan his appeal.

The restoration of physical light to the stellar universe by God the Holy Spirit was:

- (1) Excellent, complete, beyond practical or theoretical improvement.
- (2) Exactly fitting the needs and purpose for the appeal trial of Satan.
- (3) Without any flaws or shortcomings.
- (4) Correct in every detail.

The division of physical light from darkness and day from night is symbolic of what has taken place in the spiritual realm in the angelic conflict between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan.

Genesis 1:5, “God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.”

“**Called**” is the verb *qara*, which expresses the Lord Jesus Christ “absolute sovereignty” over creation and the restored creation.

Psalms 93:1, “The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved.”

The phrase “**and there was evening and there was morning, one day**” refers to a literal 24-hour period since Genesis was written by Moses to Israel, which marked time by literal 24-hour periods.

Israel was taught that God rested on the 7th day and according to Exodus 20:8-11 she was commanded by God to obey the Sabbath every 7th

day, thus, for the children of Israel, all 7 days represent days of 24 hours in length.

Each day of restoration that is recorded in Genesis 1 typifies some part of the work of redemption of man. When I say, “typify” I’m referring to “typology,” which is from the Greek word for form or pattern, which in biblical times denoted both the original model or prototype and the copy that resulted.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between 2 historical entities; the former is indirect and implicit, the latter direct and explicit. Therefore, historical event of the Lord restoring light to creation parallels the incarnation of the Son of God who is the Light of the world. The first day of restoration where the Lord restores light to creation typifies the incarnation of the Son of God who is the light of the world.

Genesis 1:6-8 records the 2nd day of restoration.

Genesis 1:6

“Then God said, ‘Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’”

Corrected translation of Genesis 1:6, “Next, God commanded, ‘let there be an atmosphere in the middle of the waters, and let it be a cause of division between waters from waters.’”

“An expanse” is the masculine singular form of the noun *raqia* (pronounced: rah-kee’ag), which refers to the earth’s atmosphere.

The noun *raqia* literally refers to “an expansion of plates meaning broad plates beaten out.”

In the Old Testament, the noun *raqia* refers to the canopy over the cherubim under the throne in Ezekiel’s vision (1:22, 26), the stellar universe (Gen. 1:14-17; Dan. 12:3; Ps. 19:1; 150:1), or the earth’s atmosphere (Gen. 1:6; 1:20).

In Genesis 1:6, the noun *raqia* in Genesis 1:6 refers to the earth’s atmosphere.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the Creator of both heaven and earth created 3 levels of heaven

according to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit restored them:

1st heaven: Earth’s atmosphere.

2nd heaven: Stellar universe.

3rd heaven: Abode of God, the angels and the dead believers.

The original languages of Scripture teach that there are three levels of heaven. This multiplicity of heavens is indicated in Hebrews 4:14 where our Lord at His ascension is said to have “**passed through the heavens**” (accusative masculine plural noun *ouranos*). The 1st and 2nd heaven are not specifically mentioned but the 3rd heaven is.

2 Corinthians 12:2, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”

Logically speaking, it is evident that there cannot be a 3rd heaven without also a 1st and 2nd heaven.

“**Waters**” is the noun *mayim* refers to the mass of water that flooded and enveloped the earth.

“**Separate**” is the verb *badhal*, which in the hiphil (causative) stem means, “to cause a division” between the waters.

Genesis 1:7

“God made the expanse, and separated the waters which were below the atmosphere from the waters which were above the atmosphere; and it was so.” NASU

Corrected translation of Genesis 1:7, “Consequently, God restored the atmosphere and thus caused a division between the waters, which were beneath the atmosphere and the waters, which were above the atmosphere, thus it came to pass as previously described.”

Genesis 1:7 records that as a result of the division of the flood waters that there was a transparent water vapor canopy above the earth’s atmosphere and of course waters below this atmosphere.

The waters “**above**” the earth’s atmosphere was a vast blanket of water vapor above the troposphere and possibly above the stratosphere as well, in the high temperature region now known as the

ionosphere, and extending far into space. They could “not” have been the clouds of water droplets, which now float in the atmosphere, because the Scripture says they were *me'al laraqia*, “**above the atmosphere.**”

Furthermore, there was no “**rain upon the earth**” in those days according to Genesis 2:5, nor, was there any rainbow in the clouds (Gen. 9:13). Both of which must have been present if these upper waters represented merely the clouds that populate the earth’s atmosphere.

This vast water canopy above the earth’s atmosphere evidently must have been transparent in order for the stars and planets of the stellar universe to “**give light upon the earth,**” and to “**be for signs and for seasons, and for days, and years**” (Gen. 1:14-15). This vapor canopy would serve as a greenhouse maintaining an essentially uniform pleasant warm temperature all over the world since water vapor has the ability both to transmit incoming solar radiation and to retain and disperse much of the radiation reflected from the earth’s surface.

Great air-mass movements would be inhibited and windstorms would be non-existent with uniform temperatures all over the earth. The earth would not only have uniform temperatures but also would also have comfortable uniform humidity by means of daily local evaporation and condensation like dew, or ground fog in each day-night cycle.

The combination of warm temperature and adequate moisture all over the earth would be conducive later to extensive lush vegetation all over the world with no barren deserts or ice caps. This vapor canopy would be highly effective in filtering out ultraviolet radiations, cosmic rays, and other destructive energies from outer space. Many of these are the source of both somatic and genetic mutations, which decrease the viability of the individual and the species, respectively, thus, the canopy would contribute effectively to human and animal health and longevity.

This vast water canopy above the earth’s atmosphere would provide one of the sources (the other, the water underneath the earth) from which God would send the Great Flood. The content of water vapor in the “present” atmosphere, if all precipitated, would cover the earth only to a depth

of about 1 inch. Even though the waters above the earth’s atmosphere were condensed and precipitated during the Flood, they will be restored during the Millennium thus providing once again perfect environment and longevity of life for man.

Psalm 148:4-6, “Praise Him, highest heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created. He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree, which will not pass away.”

The waters underneath the earth’s atmosphere constituted a shoreless ocean since the dry land did not appear until the 3rd day.

“**Made**” is the verb *‘asah* (pronounced gah-sah), which means, “to restore” in the sense that God the Holy Spirit reconstructed out of existing material the atmosphere and brought it back to its original condition prior to God’s judgment of the Satanic rebellion.

Genesis 1:8

“God called the expanse heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.”
NASU

The Lord Jesus Christ does not employ *tov*, “**good**,” after the second day of restoration as He does after the first, third, fourth, fifth and sixth days since Satan and the fallen angels inhabit the earth’s atmosphere.

Ephesians 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

An invisible war is taking place in the church age between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of darkness throughout the earth’s atmosphere as part of the angelic conflict (Dan. 10:20; Eph. 2:2; 6:11-17) and will visibly manifest itself during the Tribulation period (Rev. 6-19).

The insertion of the atmosphere that ‘divided’ the mass of water that flooded the earth into two bodies of water (the ocean in Scripture is used in a figurative sense for the mass of humanity on earth-Rev. 17:1, 15) typified Christ’s cross which

divides the human race into either believers or unbelievers.

The record of the restoration of the 3rd day appears in Genesis 1:9-13, and records the “shoreless” ocean gathered into one place so that the dry land underneath might appear.

Genesis 1:9

“Then God said, ‘Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear’; and it was so.” NASU

“Waters” is the noun *mayim*, which refers to the flood waters that were underneath the earth’s freshly restored atmosphere that constituted a shoreless ocean before the dry land appeared on the 3rd day.

Causing the dry land to appear caused tremendous geological changes in the surface of the earth. Surveys of the ocean floor and the mid-Atlantic rift indicate that all the continents were once joined together in a super continent, which corresponds to what the Scriptures states here in Genesis 1:9. The Noachic flood broke this single landmass apart resulting in our present geological and topographical make up of the present day earth.

Genesis 1:10

“God called the dry land earth, and the gathering of the waters He called seas; and God saw that it was good.” NASU

The Lord Jesus Christ owns the earth since He created it.

Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the LORD’S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.” NASU

The earth was never to stop its productivity.

Genesis 8:22, “while the earth stands, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

The earth is not an independent, self-contained mechanism, for **“the Lord reigns”** as He **“sits on the vault of the earth”**.

Isaiah 40:22, “It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like

grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.” NASU

There will be no oceans in the new earth that God will create.

Revelation 21:1, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.”

Since Satan and the fallen angels will not be residing in the new heavens and new earth but rather will be in the lake of fire for all of eternity and the fact that there will be no oceans in the new earth we can conclude that the fallen angels are incarcerated underneath the oceans.

Genesis 1:11

“Then God said

“Let the earth sprout vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so.” NASU

“Vegetation” is noun *deshe* (deh-sheh), which refers to all plant life on planet earth.

The context indicates that the noun *deshe*, “vegetation” is a broad term, which encompasses both “plants producing seed” and “fruit trees producing fruit.”

Vegetables and fruit were to be the diet of Adam and the woman and for the Antediluvians to follow them but this changed after Noah came out of the ark with his family (Gen. 9:1-4).

“Plants” is the masculine singular noun *`esev* (eh-sev), which is a very broad term referring to plant life of all types.

“Yielding” is verb *zara* (zaw-raw), which is in the hiphil (causative) stem emphasizing the process of yielding or producing seed in plant life whereas “seed” is the noun *zera* (zeh-reh), which refers to the product produced by plant life.

The noun *p^eri*, “fruit” (per-ee) refers to fruit of all types and the noun *`ets* (ates), “trees” in the singular form is used of fruit trees collectively.

“**Bearing**” is the verb *ʿasah* (gah-sah), “to reproduce” and is used of the reproductive function of fruit trees.

“**After their kind**” means that each organism was to reproduce after its own order or species or family, not after some other order, family or species.

Genesis 1:12 records the result of God the Holy Spirit executing the God the Son’s command to let the earth produce vegetation of all types.

Genesis 1:12,13

“The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit with seed in them, after their kind; and God saw that it was good.” NASU

“There was evening and there was morning, a third day.” NASU

Each day of restoration that is recorded in Genesis 1 typifies some part of the work of redemption of man. The third day typifies the resurrection of Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:20, “But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep.”

Genesis 1:14-19 records the 4th day of the restoration of planet earth and the stellar universe from the judgment it received as a result of the Satanic rebellion.

Genesis 1:14

“Then God said, ‘Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years.’”

“**Lights**” is the noun *ma’or* (pronounced: mah-ore), which literally means, “light-givers, generators of light” and refers to the stellar universe, which is the 2nd heaven and is composed of various luminous bodies such as moons, stars, suns and planets that generate light.

The spiritual application is that the believer is reflecting the Light of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ when he is in fellowship with God by obeying the Father’s will as it is revealed by the

Spirit through the communication of the Word of God.

Philippians 2:14,15

“Continue performing all activities without murmurs resulting from doubts so that you might demonstrate yourselves to be uncensurable and uncontaminated, students of God (the Holy Spirit), virtuous in the midst of a corrupt and depraved generation.”

“Among whom you yourselves continue appearing as luminaries in the cosmos by all of you continuing to exhibit the Word of life as a boast for me on the day of Christ because I have not run in vain, nor have I worked diligently in vain.”

On the 1st day of restoration, the Lord said, “**Let there be light** (*‘or*)!” but on the 4th day of restoration, He said, “**Let there be lights** (*‘ma-or*, “light-givers).”

So first of all, we have “intrinsic” light restored to the original creation that was judged for the Satanic rebellion, which found its source in the manifestation of the glory and presence of God and then here on the 4th day we have generators of light restored.

These luminaries were to serve a 5-fold purpose according to Genesis 1:14: (1) To divide the day from the night (2) Signs (3) Seasons (4) Days (5) Years.

Genesis 1:15,16

“and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.”

“God made the two great lights, the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; He made the stars also.” NASU

“**Made**” is the verb *ʿasah* (pronounced gah-sah), which means, “to restore” in the sense that God the Holy Spirit reconstructed out of existing material the sun and the moon and brought them back to their original condition prior to God’s judgment of the Satanic rebellion.

“**The two great lights**” refers to the earth’s sun and moon. In relation to the planet earth, the sun

and the moon are greater in size in comparison to the rest of the luminaries residing in the stellar universe. In relation to planet earth, the sun and the moon appear larger than the rest of the luminaries residing in the stellar universe although in reality they are not.

The sun is greater than the moon in the sense that it generates light whereas the moon simply reflects the sun's light.

"**The greater light**" refers to the earth's sun. The sun generates light and the moon reflects the sun's light, thus the sun is greater and the moon lesser of a light-giver.

"**The lesser light**" refers to the earth's moon. "**He made the stars also**" refers to the stars of the stellar universe.

Genesis 1:17-19

"**God placed them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth.**"

"**and to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good.**"

"**There was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.**"

In the fourth day's work our Lord's ascension is typically suggested. "**Two great luminaries**" typify Christ and His church. The sun speaks of "**the Sun of righteousness**" (Malachi 4:2), and the moon speaks of the church. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun so the church reflects the light of Christ meaning the church is to reflect the character of Christ.

Just as the sun and the moon are "**to be a cause of illumination upon the earth**" (v. 17), and secondly, they are "**to rule over the day and over the night**" (v. 18) so it is with Christ and His people.

During the present interval of darkness, the world's night, Christ and His people are "**the light of the world**," but during the Millennium they shall rule and reign over the earth. Thus in the first four days' work in Genesis 1, we have foreshadowed the four great stages or crises in the accomplishment of the work of redemption.

The incarnation, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ are respectively typified. In the light of this how precious are those words at the close of the six days' work: "**Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 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**" (Gen. 2:1, 2). The work of Redemption is completed, and in that work God finds His rest!

The fifth day of restoration is recorded in Genesis 1:20-23.

Genesis 1:20

"**Then God said, 'Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.'**"

"**Teem**" means, "to abound or swarm; be prolific or fertile." This is an excellent choice by the New American Standard Updated version since it accurately conveys the meaning of the Hebrew verb *sharats*.

"**The waters**" refers to the mass of water that formed the seas that surrounded the super continent.

"**Living**" is the noun *nephesh* (pronounced: neh-pesh), which denotes soul life.

"**Creatures**" is the noun *chayyah*, which is a designation for all kinds of marine life: vertebrate, invertebrate and reptiles.

The fact that animals have soul life does not mean they are on a par with mankind. The soul life of animals is completely different from the soul life of human beings since mankind was created in the image of God and marine life and animal life and the birds were not.

As with the soul of men, the soul of marine and animal life and the birds were *bara*, "created out of nothing or non-existing material."

The "physical bodies" of animal and marine life and the birds as well as mankind was *yatsar*, "created out of existing material, constructed out of existing material," namely, the earth.

A comparison of Genesis 1:21 with Genesis 2:19 indicates that marine and animal life and the birds are composed of soul life, which is created out of non-existing material and physical life, which is created out of existing material, namely, the earth, the dust of the ground.

The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:21 indicates that the soul of marine and animal life and the birds was created out of non-existing material whereas the verb *yatsar* in Genesis 2:19 indicates that the physical bodies of marine and animal life and the birds were created out of existing material, namely, the earth.

Genesis 1:21

“God created (*bara*) the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good.” NASU

Genesis 2:19, “Out of the ground the LORD God formed (*yatsar*, “to create out of existing material”) every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. NASU

“**Created**” is the verb *bara*, which means, “to create out of nothing.” This word expresses the concept of “bringing an object into existence out of non-existent material.”

Genesis 1:1, “In eternity past, God created out of nothing (*bara*) the heavens and the earth.”

In Genesis 1:21, it indicates that the souls of all marine life, animals and the birds were “created out of nothing.”

“**The great sea monsters**” refers to the dinosaurs. In Genesis 1:21, the adjective *gadhol*, “great” is used of extended dimension to describe the “size” of the *tannin*, “monsters.”

The word *tannin* can denote a “large reptile” or simply some “large animal.” The context in which the word is used will determine what kind of large reptile or large animal is in view.

Now, in Genesis 1:21, many of the English translations translate the noun *tannin* “sea

monsters, creatures of the sea.” But *tannin* does not specifically refer to a creature that lives in the water.

Now, in the Hebrew Old Testament, the word is used in some contexts referring to “snakes, serpents” (Ex. 7:9-12; Deut. 32:33). Sometimes in the Hebrew Old Testament, *tannin* can refer to the “crocodile” that infested the waters of the Nile River in Egypt (Ezek. 29:3).

Many times the word refers to a “jackal,” which was a scavenger that roamed about the ruins of abandoned cities and was always used to symbolize God’s judgment (Job 30:29; Psalm 44:19; Isa. 35:7; 43:20; Jer. 9:11). Also, the noun *tannin* is used for the “whale” (Job 7:12; Ps. 148:7; Ezek. 32:2).

One of the reasons why many of the English translations translate the word “**sea monsters, sea creatures**” in Genesis 1:21 is that they connect it to the following relative clause, which is incorrect to do since the adjective *gadhol*, which modifies this noun *tannin* completes an independent statement. The “adjunctive” use of the relative *w*^e plus the primary particle *eth*, which follow *eth-hattanninim haggedholim* serves to mark a new statement that is independent from the previous one.

This statement at the beginning of Genesis 1:21 indicates that the *tannin* are in a category all their own. So the noun *tannin* denotes a “large reptile,” or some kind of “large animal.” It is modified by the adjective *gadhol*, “great, large, massive,” or “big.”

Understanding the meaning of the adjective *gadhol* in Genesis 1:21, which is modifying the noun *tannin*, “large reptile, large animal” is critical to determining what type of large reptile or animal is in view here. The adjective *gadhol* describes the massive size of these already large reptiles or animals. Therefore, together the noun *tannin*, “monsters” plus the adjective *gadhol*, “great” denotes a large or massive reptile or animal. Thus, it refers to none other than the dinosaurs, which were reptiles.

Also, further indicating that these massive reptiles were the dinosaurs is the definite article *ha* preceding the noun *tannin*. The article serves to

indicate that these massive reptiles were in a class by themselves. The definite article *ha* is “generic” meaning that it marks out a particular class or category of massive reptiles that were unique and determined in themselves.

British anatomist Sir Richard Owen coined the word “dinosaur” in 1842. The term was derived from the Greek words *deinos*, meaning “marvelous” or “terrible,” and *sauros*, meaning “lizard.” The dinosaur is one of a group of extinct reptiles that lived during the Antediluvian period meaning prior to the time of the flood of Noah and were destroyed by this flood. The fossil remains of these creatures are with us today in various graveyards around the globe. The entombment of such numbers of such great creatures literally demands some form of catastrophic action. The great catastrophe that took place on the earth that was responsible for the extinction of the dinosaur was the flood of Noah.

Genesis 1:21 classifies these living creatures into three categories: (1) Those which crawl upon the earth according to these species (2) Those which swarm in the water according to their species (3) The birds according to their species.

“**That moves**” is the articular participle form of the verb *ramas* (pronounced: raw-mas), which is used of living creatures in general that crawl about the earth and is not restricted to movement in the water.

A survey of this verb’s usage in the Hebrew Bible reveals that except for one instance in Psalm 69:34, the verb *ramas* is always used of living things that creep “**on the earth.**”

“**After their kind**” indicates that each organism was to reproduce after its own order or species or family, not after some other order, family or species.

Genesis 1:22, 23

“**God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.’”**

“**There was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.**” NASU

“**Blessed**” is the verb *barakh* (pronounced: bah-rach), “to bless.” To bless in the Hebrew Old

Testament means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* in Genesis 1:22 indicates that these living creatures residing in the sea, on the land and in the air were endued with power or in other words, provided the capacity by the word of the Lord to execute His command to be fruitful and multiply on the face of the earth. This power from the word of the Lord to be fruitful and multiply on the face of the earth continues today.

“**Be fruitful**” is the verb *parah*, which is pronounced paw-raw and means, “to be fruitful” in the sense of to reproduce.

“**Multiply**” is the verb *ravah* is intransitive and means, “to multiply, to increase” in number or quantity. Basically this word connotes numerical increase. It refers to the process of increasing numerically.

The fifth day typifies the new creation, which has the life of God in it. Five is the number of grace in Scripture. Four is the number of creation and the world, and then it represents the weakness and helplessness and impotence of both the angels and men and vanity. But four plus one is significant of Divine strength added to and made perfect in that human and angelic weakness and impotence.

It is significant of divine omnipotence combined with the impotence of the earth, of the Divine grace uninfluenced and invincible.

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me for my benefit and it still has application at the present time, my grace is as an eternal truth sufficient for you, for my power as an eternal truth finds its consummation in human impotence. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

It is well known to Bible students that in Scripture “waters” symbolize peoples, nations (cf. Revelation 17:15). In its typical application then, Genesis 1:20-23 signifies life being manifested in unregenerate humanity. This typifies the Christian experience where the believer by experiencing identification with Christ in His death and resurrection manifests the life of God in the midst of the spiritually dead.

Philippians 3:10, 11

“that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death.”

“If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones.”

Genesis 1:24-31 contains the record of the 6th and final day of restoration.

Genesis 1:24

“Then 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.”

“**Cattle**” is the noun *b^ehemah* is incorrectly translated since it is too narrow of a term for this very broad term in the Hebrew and refers to all types of “domestic animals,” because of its manifest contrast in Genesis 1:24 with the “**wild beasts of the earth**” (Hebrew: *w^echay^etho-`erets*), thus it would include cattle.

It refers to a particular category of living creature that is four footed and whose habitat is on land as opposed to the other two classes of living creatures that exist either in the air, the birds (Gn. 1:20-23; 6:7) or in the sea (marine life in Gen. 1:20-23). They also are different from the other living creatures that reside on the earth such as insects, small reptiles, most amphibians and small mammals called “**creeping things**” in Gen. 1:24 and 1 Kgs. 4:33, and “**(wild) beasts of the earth**” mentioned Gen. 1:24.

“**Creeping things**” is the noun *remes*, which refers to insects, small reptiles, most amphibians and small mammals or in other words, every animal with the exception of the larger domestic and non-domestic animals.

“**Beasts**” is the noun *chay* (pronounced: khah-ee) referring to wild or undomesticated animals, which would include large mammals such as lions and elephants, large extinct reptiles known as dinosaurs.

Genesis 1:25

“God made (*‘asah* pronounced gah-sah, which is used of God “producing” from the earth the physical bodies for the souls of the living creatures whose habitat would be on the land) the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.”

The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:21 indicates that the soul of marine and animal life and the birds was created out of non-existing material whereas the verb *yatsar* in Genesis 1:24 and 2:19 and the verb *‘asah* in Genesis 1:25 indicates that the physical bodies of marine and animal life and the birds were produced out of existing material, namely, the earth.

Genesis 2:19, “Out of the ground the LORD God formed (*yatsar*, “to construct out of existing material”) every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. NASU

Genesis 1:26

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make (*‘asah* pronounced gah-sah and means “to model” in the sense that the soul of mankind is a “copy” of God and is “patterned” after God’s invisible essence, thus man as to his essence is the shadow image of God who is invisible, thus the essence of man is invisible, i.e. the soul) man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (NASU)

The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:27 indicates that the soul of mankind was created out of non-existing material whereas the verb *yatsar* in Genesis 2:7 indicates that the physical body of man was created out of existing material, namely, the earth.

Genesis 1:27

“God created (*bara*) man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” NASU

Genesis 2:7, “Then the LORD God formed (*yatsar*, “to create out of existing material”) man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. NASU

The verb *yatsa*, “to produce out of existing material” in Genesis 2:7 refers to the physical body of Adam. Therefore, we have the “dichotomy” of mankind meaning that he is composed of body (*soma*) and soul (*psuche*).

Regenerate human beings meaning human beings who are saved are “trichotomous” meaning they are composed of body (*soma*), soul (*psuche*) and spirit (*pneuma*).

1 Thessalonians 5:23, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Prior to the Fall, Adam and the woman had fellowship with God based upon the perfection of their soul life and not by utilizing eternal life since eternal life is received through regeneration, which is the Holy Spirit’s ministry on behalf of sinners who have exercised faith alone in Christ alone.

Adam and Ishah were “dichotomous” (Gen. 2:7) and not “trichotomous” since eternal life is not imputed to a human spirit until the spiritual birth or regeneration. In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul’s statement that the first Adam, “**became a living soul**” clearly indicates that God did not create Adam with a human spirit since if He did create him with a human spirit, the Scriptures would not have called him a “**living soul**” but rather a “spirit” as the Scriptures state of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45, “So also it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

“**In Our image**” means that humanity was modeled according to the invisible image or likeness of God meaning that humanity was to reflect God’s invisible essence, thus man as to his essence is the shadow image of God who is invisible, thus the essence of man is invisible, i.e. the soul.

“**Let them rule**” indicates that the Lord delegated authority to Adam and the Woman to rule over every living creature in the sea, in the air and on the land, which was another way that he would reflect the image of God who is sovereign over creation.

Therefore, the sphere of Adam’s dominion was five-fold: (1) Fish (2) Birds (3) Domestic and non-domestic land animals (4) The earth itself (5) Creepers-crawlers (insects, small reptiles, most amphibians, small mammals).

Genesis 1:27

“**God created (*bara***

“**to create out of nothing**”) **man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**” (NASU)

Genesis 1:27 contains three statements about man: (1) “**God created out of nothing the essence of man in His own image**”: Mankind is the direct result of the creative activity of God and that as to his essence, he is the shadow image of God who is invisible and the essence of man is his soul. (2) “**In the image of God, He created him out of nothing**”: Mankind is unique among God’s creatures in that he was created in the image of God. (3) “**Male and female, He created them out of nothing**”: The soul of both the male and the female were created out of nothing according to the image of God and that mankind was created as two individuals (male and female) who were to form a unit and were to be united.

Genesis 1:28

“**God blessed (*barakh*, which is pronounced: bah-rach and means “to endue with power for success, prosperity”) them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful (*parah*, which means “to be fruitful” in the sense of to procreate, to have sex) and multiply (*ravah*, which is pronounced rah-vah and refers to population increase or growth), and fill (*male*, which is pronounced mah-leh) the earth, and subdue (*kavash* pronounced kaw-vash, which refers to harnessing the potential built into the earth by the Creator for his own comfort and prosperity and well being) it; and rule (*radhah*, which is pronounced: raw-daw, expresses that Adam would reflect the image of God who is**

sovereign by exercising sovereignty over every living creature in the sea, in the air and on the land) **over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**” NASU

Genesis 1:28 teaches us that God’s omnipotence is exercised by blessing us through His Word.

Marine and bird life and land animals were commanded to multiply but only marine life was told to “fill” something and that being the waters. Bird life and land animals were never commanded to “fill” the earth and the reason for this is that mankind was commanded to fill the earth since the earth was given to man and not land animals and the birds.

Psalm 115:16, “The heavens are the heavens of the LORD, but the earth He has given to the sons of men.”

The reason why bird life and those creatures whose habitat is the earth were never commanded to “fill” the earth is that mankind was created and designed to dominate his habitat, which would be on land and not the bird kingdom and creatures whose habitat is on land.

Genesis 1:29, 30

“Then God said, ‘Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you.’”

“and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food”; and it was so.” NASU

Genesis 1:29 and 30 teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Gracious Provider of food not only for the human race but also each and every living creature on the earth.

Genesis 1:31

“God saw all that He had made (*ʿasah*, pronounced gah-sah, which means “to do” since it summarizes the Holy Spirit’s work in creating, restoring, producing and modeling during the six days of restoration, which was in response to the commands of God the Son.), and behold, it was very good. And there was

evening and there was morning, the sixth day.” NASU

“**Very Good**” describes the “absolute perfection” of the Holy Spirit’s work in creating, restoring, producing and modeling during the six days of restoration, which was in obedience to the commands of God the Son as well as in accordance with the Father’s will, purpose and plan.

The adjective *tov* appears seven times in each of the six days recorded in Genesis 1, which is significant since seven is the number of “spiritual perfection.” The adjective *tov* is used seven times in Genesis 1 emphasizing the “perfection” and “completion” of the Holy Spirit’s work in creating, restoring, producing and modeling during the six days, which was in obedience to the commands of God the Son and in accordance therefore, with the Father’s will, purpose and plan.

The phrase “**there was evening and there was morning**” appears in Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23 and 31. Evening always precedes morning for several reasons: (1) God is working in the midst of darkness in restoring creation, which in turn typifies God’s work of redeeming first of all mankind and then the earth itself, which was brought under a curse because of Adam’s disobedience to the Lord in the Garden of Eden. (2) It typifies God’s work in our lives where at the moment of salvation we have been called out of the spiritual darkness of Satan’s cosmic system and transferred into God’s kingdom, the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). (3) God is dealing with His creatures and His creation in love, mercy and grace. (4) We can do nothing without Him and that He is working in our lives that have been filled with spiritual darkness. (5) God is revealing to us a spiritual principle that God’s omnipotence finds its consummation in not only the impotence of creation but also the impotence in our lives as human beings.

2 Corinthians 12:9: “And He has said to me for my benefit and it still has application at the present time, my grace is as an eternal spiritual truth sufficient for you, for my power as an eternal spiritual truth finds its consummation in human impotence. Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my

weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Genesis 1 teaches us that out of death, God gives life through the Word of His power and that out of the suffering of creation, God blesses. The sixth day is significant since six is the number of man and of his imperfection meaning he is destitute of God, without God, without Christ.

Man was created on the sixth day, and thus he has the number six impressed upon him. Moreover, six days were appointed to him for his labor, while one day is associated in sovereignty with the Lord God, as His rest. Six, therefore, is the number of labor also, of man's labor as apart and distinct from God's rest. True, it marks the completion of God's work in creating, restoring, producing and modeling, and therefore the number is significant of secular completeness. The sixth and final day emphasizes mankind's importance to the plan of God and in the resolution of the angelic conflict. It marks the period where mankind has achieved prominence in the plan of God since mankind would resolve the conflict between Himself and Satan.

God has defeated Satan through the death, resurrection and session of the God-Man, the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 2:6-9; Phlp. 2:6-11). The sixth day typifies the completion of the new creation while the seventh day typifies the eternal rest.

Genesis 2

Genesis 2:1

“Thus the heavens and the earth were completed (*kalah*, which is pronounced kaw-law, which means “to complete a process and expresses the fact that the “process” of creating out of nothing, producing out of existing material, and restoring was “finished” or “completed” by the seventh day”), **and all their hosts** (*tsava* “organizations and systems”).” (NASU)

“The heavens and the earth”: (1) 1st heaven (earth's atmosphere) (2) 2nd heaven (stellar universe) (3) 3rd heaven (abode of God).

“Hosts” is the noun *tsava*, which refers to the systems and organizations, and orderly arrangement of all that God has created, produced,

formed, built and restored during the six days that are recorded in Genesis 1:3-31.

“Organization” refers to the “formation into a whole of interdependent and coordinated parts for harmonious and united action” on behalf of God.”

“System” refers to the “assemblage of inanimate and animate objects forming a complex whole” that is under the authority of God.

If you recall, in Genesis 1:2b, we saw that the heavens and the earth were a chaotic disorder after God's judgment of the Satanic rebellion but after the six days they are a vast, complex organization or orderly arrangement of animate (living creatures) and inanimate objects.

“And all their hosts”: Refers to the totality of animate and inanimate objects that are contained in the first, second and third heavens and the earth: (1) Stars, satellites, and planets that compose the stellar universe. (2) Earth's sun and moon. (3) Vegetation on the earth (4) Marine life (5) Bird life (6) Terrestrial life (7) Human beings.

Genesis 2:2

“By the seventh day God completed, His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done.” (NASU)

“His work” is a reference to the activities performed by the Spirit during the six days, which were in response to the commands of God the Son and were in accordance with the Father's will, purpose and plan. The fact that Genesis 2:1-2 says that God has completed His work does not mean that God does not continue to work but rather it means that He has completed this particular work.

“By the seventh day” emphasizes that a “special sacredness,” and “marks the totality of a process completed” and lastly, it “marks a time of rest.” The seventh day stamps God's work of the previous six days with perfection and completeness. Of time, the seventh day tells of the Sabbath, and marks off the week of seven days. The Sabbath was an ordinance given to the nation of Israel and not the church.

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”

“but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.”

“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.”

Although the church was not given the ordinance to observe the Sabbath, they are commanded to enter into God’s Sabbath rest meaning to rest in the promises of God and one’s union with Christ.

Hebrews 4:1, “Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.”

Ancient Jewish and Christian writers proposed a six thousand year history of the world with a final millennium of peace based on the six days of restoration and the final seventh day of rest—the Sabbath.

Six is the number of man and 6000 years of human history represents mankind operating without God (6000 is a multiple of 6). In relation to history or time, it appears that the seventh day (the Sabbath) is a “type” of the seventh millennium (the millennial reign of Christ).

A 7000-year plan of God is an inference from typology and is not explicitly stated in the Bible. Typology is from the Greek word for form or pattern, which in biblical times denoted both the original model or prototype and the copy that resulted.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between 2 historical entities; the former is indirect and implicit, the latter direct and explicit. So the seventh day spoken of in Genesis 2:2-3 “typifies” the millennial reign of Christ.

The millennial reign of Christ will be the greatest period of Israel’s history since she will be head of

the nations and the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ will rule in Jerusalem. Christ will literally reign in Jerusalem and Israel will be the head of the nations. There will be a perfect world government under the rule of Christ (Isa. 11:1-2; Zech. 14:9).

All of creation will be at peace during the Millennium (Rom. 8:19-20) and there will be no war for 1000 years during the Millennium. The Scriptures make clear that the world government during the millennium will be under the rule of the Lord Jesus Christ (Is. 2:2-4; 9:3-7; 11:1-10; 16:5; Dan. 2:44; 7:15-28; Obad. 17-21; Mic. 4:1-8; 5:2-5; Zeph. 3:9-10; Zech. 9:10-15; 14:16-17).

Genesis 2:3

“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”
(NASU)

“**Blessed**” is the verb *barakh* (pronounced: bah-rach), which means, “to bless” in the sense that God blessed the seventh day in that He attached special significance to it because He brought to completion His work of the six days of restoration. He also blessed the seventh day in the sense that He attached special benefit to it for mankind since it would be a day of rest and would typify the millennial reign of Christ and the eternal state and the defeat of Satan. Therefore, the seventh day would be a blessing to mankind in that it typifies the millennium, which would be a thousand years of peace under the rulership of Christ and the thousand-year imprisonment of Satan and the fallen angels.

Also, the seventh day would be a blessing to mankind in that it typifies the eternal state where there would be perpetual peace and the creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

Finally, Satan and the fallen angels’ sentence would be executed and they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire and reside there forever and ever.

So the fact that God blessed the seventh day is His guaranteeing that He will be victorious over Satan and that Satan’s sentence will be executed and that there will be peace forever for the entire human race that are saved.

“**Sanctified it**” means that the seventh day was sanctified in the sense that it was set apart from the other days of the week in order to fulfill God’s purposes for mankind entering His eternal rest.

“**He rested**” is the verb *shavath* (pronounced: shaw-vath), “to cease” and is used of God’s activity during the six days.

The fact that God is said to have “ceased” from His activity does not mean that He was tired but simply that He was satisfied with His work, which He had brought to completion by the seventh day. It means that there was nothing He could add to what He already accomplished during the six days, thus, it was perfect in every detail.

“**Created**” is the verb *bara*, “to create out of nothing” and is used in relation to the following “creative” activities during the six days.

“**Made**” is the verb *asah*, which means, “to restore” and is used of God’s “restorative” activities during the six days.

Restoration is a return of something to a former, original, normal or unimpaired condition. The earth was returned to its former, original, normal, and unimpaired condition that it was in prior the judgment of the Satanic rebellion by God.

There were creative activities taking place during this time of restoration. Mankind was created on the sixth day in order to resolve the angelic conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

The second chapter of Genesis 2 gives us more details concerning the third, fifth and six days, or in other words Genesis 2 complements Genesis 1, thus, indicating that some of the work that took place in Genesis 1 is also recorded in Genesis 2. The first chapter of Genesis was “chronological” and emphasized a doctrine of a sovereign, transcendent, yet personal God in relation to mankind whereas, the second chapter of Genesis is “topical” and gives us a doctrine of humanity in relation to God. Genesis 2 is giving us more details surrounding the restoration and creation of mankind.

Genesis 2:4b-6 refers back to the third day of restoration, which is recorded in Genesis 1:9-13 and Genesis 2:7 gives us more details concerning

the creation of mankind on the sixth day, which is recorded in Genesis 1:24-31.

Genesis 2:4

“This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven.”

“**This is the account**” is the plural use of the demonstrative pronoun *elleh* (hl#a@) and the feminine plural form of the noun *toledhoth* (pronounced: toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T).

This Hebrew expression appears ten times in the book of Genesis and is always used as a heading or title for what is to follow and never does it refer to what precedes and provides the outline or framework to the book of Genesis. It is always used in a “transitional” sense meaning it is not used as a conclusion to what precedes but rather it is used as an introduction to what follows.

In Genesis 2:4, the expression *elleh thol^edhoth* serves as an introduction to what follows in the remaining portion of Genesis 2.

The phrase “**this is the account of the heavens and the earth**” does not mean “this is how the heavens and the earth came to be” but “these are the events, which happened after the creation of the heavens and the earth.”

Moses is through dealing with the heavens and the earth in general and will now focus on the details of the restoration in relation to the creation of mankind.

“**When they were created**” is the preposition *b^e* (B+), “after” with the infinitive construct of the niph'al (passive) form of the verb *bara* (ar*B*), “to create out of nothing.”

The preposition *b^e* with the infinitive construct of the verb *bara* denotes the temporal proximity of the original creation with the restoration and indicates the events that Moses records in Genesis 2 took place “after” the creation of the heavens of the earth. Thus implying that what is mentioned in Genesis 2:4b-6 is related to the third day of restoration and Genesis 2:7, the sixth day, both of which took place after the original creation recorded in Genesis 1:1.

Therefore, we could translate **Genesis 2:4a**: **“These are the events proceeding after the heavens and the earth were created out of nothing.”**

“**In the day**” is the preposition b^e (B+), and the noun *yom* (SW{y}). The noun *yom*, “**day**” does not refer to a literal 24 hour period as it did in Genesis 1, but rather, it refers to a “period of time,” namely, the six days of restoration recorded in Genesis 1:3-31.

“**In**” is the preposition b^e is used in a temporal sense and means, “during.”

“**Made**” is the infinitive construct of the verb *ʿasah* (HC#U*), “to restore,” which together with the preposition b^e denotes that Moses is referring to the events that took place “during” the restoration of the heavens of the earth. Thus implying that what is mentioned in Genesis 2:4b-6 is related to the third day of restoration and Genesis 2:7, the sixth day, both of which took place after the original creation recorded in Genesis 1:1, which is mentioned at the beginning of Genesis 2:4.

In Genesis 1, the noun *Elohim*, “**God**” was used alone emphasizing God’s omnipotence in creation and restoration but in Genesis two, the word is used with *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” emphasizing God’s personal attention to the creation of Adam and the Woman.

Corrected translation of Genesis 2:4: “These are the events proceeding after the heavens and the earth were created out of nothing, during the period of time the Lord God restored the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 2:5

“Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.”

Genesis 2:6

“But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.”

Genesis 1:11-12 tells us that on the third day God caused the earth to produce vegetation whereas

Genesis 2:5-6 reveals that God caused the earth to produce vegetation by causing a mist to come up from the earth that watered the earth, which in turn caused the vegetation to grow.

Genesis 2:7

“Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”

“**Formed**” is the verb *yatsar* (RX^Y*), “to construct something out of existing material,” which is used in reference to the physical body of Adam, or in other words, his biological life.

“**From the ground**” indicates that the preincarnate Christ constructing from the elements of the ground, Adam’s physical body, his biological life.

The physical body of Adam was constructed from the elements in the dust of the ground whereas his soul according to Genesis 1:27 was created out of nothing in the image and likeness of God. The physical body of Adam was not created in the image of God but rather his soul, which is invisible just as God is invisible.

The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:27 indicates that the soul of mankind was created out of non-existing material whereas the verb *yatsar* in Genesis 2:7 indicates that the physical body of man was created out of existing material, namely, the earth.

The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:27 teaches us that the soul of Adam was “created out of nothing” whereas the verb *ʿasah* in Genesis 1:26 indicates that the soul of Adam was “modeled” according to the likeness and image of God Himself. Therefore, we have the “dichotomy” of mankind meaning that he is composed of body (*soma*) and soul (*psuche*).

“**Breathed into**” is the verb *naphach* (JP^N*), which has as its subject, the Lord Jesus Christ, thus teaching that the Lord Jesus is responsible for a person becoming a human being.

“**Breath**” is the noun *neshamah* (HM^V*N&), which means, “soul” and refers to the breath of God, which generates human life.

“**Life**” is the masculine “plural” form of the noun *chayyim* (syYlj^), which means, “life,” and specifically human life.

Together, these two words literally mean, “breath of lives, a soul having life, i.e. human life.”

In Genesis 2:7 the plural noun *chayyim* is an “abstract” noun, which is frequently expressed by a plural signifying a quality or state. The “abstract” plural noun *chayyim* refers to the state of Adam meaning God breathed into his nostrils “soul life.” Although the word is plural in Genesis 2:7, it should be translated into the English in the singular form since the plural form of the word is referring to the state of Adam possessing soul life. Therefore, Adam was “dichotomous” meaning he was composed of physical or biological life, and soul life and not “trichotomous” meaning, body, soul and spirit.

The believer receives a human spirit at the moment of salvation through regeneration, thus making him “trichotomous.”

In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul’s statement that the first Adam, “**became a living soul**” clearly indicates that God did not create Adam with a human spirit since if He did create him with a human spirit, the Scriptures would not have called him a “**living soul**” but rather a “spirit” as the Scriptures state of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45, “So also it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

Genesis 2:7 teaches that Adam did “not” become a living soul until God imputed soul life to his biological life, thus, indicating that life does not begin until God imputes soul life to biological life. Soul life is created by God and imputed at physical birth as the means of transmitting the human soul.

Biological life + soul life = a physically alive human being or biological life animated by the invisible immaterial attributes of the soul.

In Genesis 2:8-14, we have more details given to us by Moses regarding the sixth day of restoration and in particular, we have a description of the environment that Adam was to inhabit, namely, a

garden located in a land called Eden. This garden that was located in Eden would be the sight where the ancient prehistoric conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan would continue.

In eternity past, like Adam, Satan, who was called, “**the bright morning star, son of the dawn**,” was created perfect and lived in a garden called Eden. Therefore, the garden of Eden of Genesis 2 and 3 is a “restored” one whereas the one that Satan lived in was the “original.”

Man was created by God to not only to have fellowship with God and to rule over the works of God’s hands but he was also created to resolve the conflict between Satan and God where Satan believes that evil and disobedience to God’s sovereign will is a viable alternative to fellowship with Him and obedience.

Satan believes he is justified in having a rival kingdom and desiring the worship of God’s creatures, thus he believes that God is unjust in sentencing him to the lake of fire forever and ever for his rebellion.

The garden of Eden was restored and mankind placed in this garden in order to demonstrate to Satan and all the angels, both elect and non-elect that Satan is wrong and that the creature cannot live independently of his Creator and be successful and find true happiness and fulfillment.

Mankind was also designed to demonstrate to the angels that God does love His creatures and that He has their best interests in mind and is willing to veil His glory and become a member of the human race to deliver them from sin and the lake of fire, which God’s holiness requires for disobedience to His commands.

Satan believes he is justified in disobeying God and rebelling against him and the creation of mankind was designed to demonstrate to all the angels, both elect and non-elect that the creature cannot find true happiness and fulfillment independently of Him.

In the garden of Eden, Adam and the Woman’s obedience would be tested by God. God would allow Satan to test Adam and the Woman by permitting them to disobey in order that God’s incomparable grace and love would be revealed at

the Cross of Calvary through the Lord Jesus Christ's death on the Cross. Therefore, the garden of Eden would be the place that Satan would launch his first attack against mankind and God in order to demonstrate that he is justified in his rebellion against God and that God is unjust for sentencing him to the lake of fire forever and ever.

God temporarily permits the existence of evil in His creation in order to demonstrate once and for all to both angels and men that it is impossible for the creature to ever live independently of his Creator. God did not create evil but rather evil is the result of God's creatures disobeying Him because they desire to live independently of Him.

God permits evil to temporarily exist in His creation because He created His creatures with a volition and freedom to choose for Him or against Him. God is not unjust for creating His creatures with volition and permitting them to disobey Him but rather the creature is responsible for his own actions.

God has done everything through His Son Jesus Christ to prevent both men and angels from going to the lake of fire. Therefore, the men and angels go to the lake of fire because they choose to live independently of God.

Genesis 2:8

“The LORD God planted a garden toward the east, in Eden; and there He placed the man whom He had formed.”

“**Garden**” is the noun *gan* (WG^), which refers to “a protected enclosure.”

The LXX (Septuagint: Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translates the Hebrew noun *gan* in Genesis 2:8 with the noun *paradeisos* (paravdeiso\$), “Paradise.” The term “paradise” is borrowed from the Persian by the LXX translators and suggests a “royal park.” This garden or royal park was located in a place called “**Eden**.”

“**Eden**” is the proper noun *Edhen* (/d#u@) which means, “delight” and comes from the Akkadian-Sumerian word *eden*, “plain, steppe.” The early Sumerians got their word *eden*, “a plain” from the fact that the original Eden was a flat, fertile tract of land. Therefore, the garden of Eden

was a “garden of delight, a land of delight, a delightful royal park.”

“**Towards the East**” is composed of the preposition *min* (/m!), “**towards**” and the noun *qedhem* (sd#q#), “**East**” indicating that this garden that the Lord planted was located east of the land of Canaan or at least, the Jordan River, which was location of the recipients (Israel) of the book of Genesis.

We must remember that God views everything from the standpoint of the land of Israel, therefore the garden of Eden was located east of the land of Israel. The garden of Eden mentioned and described in Genesis 2:8-14 is “not” the original one but a “restored” one with a different occupant.

Ezekiel 28:13 teaches that the original garden of Eden had as its occupant Satan who before his fall according to Isaiah 14:12 had the title *Hallel Ben Shachar*, “**star of the morning, son of the dawn**.”

Ezekiel 28:13, “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared.”

The original garden of Eden was destroyed as a result of God's judgment of Satan's rebellion since according to Genesis 1:2 the earth was an empty desolation and was enshrouded in darkness and flooded with water.

Genesis 2:8 indicates that Adam was created and his physical body constructed outside of this garden that was located in Eden since the passage says the Lord “**placed**” Adam in the garden implying that he was outside of this garden.

Genesis 2:9

“Out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.”

The “**tree of the knowledge of good and evil**” was the only tree in the garden that had a

prohibition attached to it in order that God would test the obedience of Adam and the Woman and Satan could have an opportunity to prove God unjust for sentencing him to the lake of fire for his disobedience.

If Adam and the Woman ate the fruit from the “**tree of life**” it would continue to perpetuate their life of their physical bodies.

If Adam and the Woman ate the fruit from the “**tree of the knowledge of good and evil**” they would separate themselves from God, which is called spiritual death.

Not only did God tell Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but He told him *why*, which is that he would die spiritually meaning he would be separated from God for his disobedience.

Genesis 2:16, 17

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely.’”

“but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

The fact that the Lord told Adam why he cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil demonstrates God’s love and concern for Adam and that He had his best interests in mind.

We will have more to say about these two trees when we study Genesis 2:15-18.

Now Genesis 2:10-14 gives us a greater description of the garden of Eden.

Genesis 2:10

“Now a river flowed out of Eden to water the garden; and from there it divided and became four rivers.”

A river flowed out of Eden through the garden and divided into four heads. It is interesting that the New Jerusalem will have something very similar.

Revelation 22:1, 2

“Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb.”

“in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life (group or row of trees called the “tree of life”), bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

Genesis 2:11

“The name of the first is Pishon; it flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold.”

Genesis 2:12

“The gold of that land is good; the bdellium and the onyx stone are there.”

The water flow in the river of Eden must have been very large since it traversed the garden and separated into four “distributaries,” each of which was a large and long river.

The first river was named “**Pishon**,” which means, “increase” and is described as encompassing the entire land of Havilah that contained gold that was of the highest quality as well as the onyx.

The Pishon more than likely was in the Arabian peninsula since the person Havilah, the ancestor of the land, was the brother of Ophir, a region associated with the Arabian peninsula and known for its fine gold (Gen. 10:29; 1 Chr. 1:23).

Genesis 2:13

“The name of the second river is Gihon; it flows around the whole land of Cush.”

The second river was named “**Gihon**” is described as encompassing the entire land of Cush, which in most of the Old Testament refers to Ethiopia but here it refers to the Sudan.

Genesis 2:14

“The name of the third river is Tigris; it flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.”

The “**Tigris**” ran east of Assyria but in history it was known to have been on the west side of Assyria and this is due to the fact that Noahic flood changed the geography of planet earth. The Tigris rises in the mountains of Armenia, latitude 38 degrees 10 minutes, longitude 39 degrees 20 minutes, only a few miles from the main branch of

the Euphrates. The total length of the river is 1,146 miles. It now joins the Euphrates about 40 miles Northwest of the Persian Gulf, the two streams there forming the Shat el Arab. But in early historical times they entered the Persian Gulf by separate mouths, the Gulf then extending a considerable distance above the present junction of the rivers, the sediment of the streams having silted up the head of the Gulf to that distance.

The “**Euphrates**” river was located in southern Mesopotamia. This river rises in the mountains of Armenia Major and flows through Assyria, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the city of Babylon, from 1,700 to 1,800 miles into the Persian Gulf. It is navigable for small vessels for 1,200 miles from its mouth. It floods like the Nile, becoming swollen in the months of March, April, and May by the melting of the snows.

The “**Tigris**” and “**Euphrates**” rivers exist today but the “**Pishon**” and “**Gihon**” are not identifiable to us today since the geography of planet earth was changed dramatically because of the Noahic flood.

Prior to the flood of Noah, there were no continents but rather a super continent, which during the flood was broken up into the seven continents we have today. There is no way of knowing the exact location of this garden that was planted by the Lord in Eden since it was destroyed during the flood of Noah but since the Tigris and Euphrates exist today we can infer that it was could have been located somewhere in the Persian Gulf area or the area now known as Iraq.

Genesis 2:15

“Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.”

“**Put**” is the verb *nuach* (j[^]Wn), which in the hiphil (causative) stem means that the Lord caused Adam to “settle down” in this garden located in land of Eden and refers to the fact that the Lord was establishing this garden to be his home.

This work indicates that the Lord had a specific geographical location that He wanted Adam to be in order to serve Him.

The “geographical” will of God refers to where God wants us to be in order to serve Him. The book of Jonah teaches us the consequences of not being in the specific geographical location that the Lord has ordained for us.

“**Cultivate**” is the verb *avadh* (db[^]u*), which is in the infinitive construct form and preceded by the preposition *l^e* (lamed) denotes the first “purpose” for which the Lord caused Adam to settle down in the garden of Eden, which was to “work” the garden.

“**Keep**” is the verb *shamar* (rm[^]v*), which is in the infinitive construct form and is preceded by the preposition *l^e* (lamed) denotes the second “purpose” for which the Lord caused Adam to settle down in the garden of Eden, namely, to “take care of” this garden.

Adam was to serve the Lord in the garden by working it and take care of it in a stewardship capacity for the Lord.

Genesis 2:15 teaches that the Lord gave Adam work to do and was not simply always reclining in a hammock drinking a beer or having a class of wine. Work was originally designed by the Lord to be a blessing for man but after the Fall, it became a curse (Gen. 3:17-19).

Genesis 3:17-19

“Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.’”

“Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field.”

“By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

Believers are commanded in the New Testament to work.

Ephesians 4:28, “He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he

will have something to share with one who has need.”

Believers are commanded to do their work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men.

Colossians 3:23, “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

Genesis 2:15 teaches that the Lord put Adam in the garden to serve Him by working the garden and taking care of it for the Lord as a steward.

Genesis 1:26-28 teaches that Adam was created in the image of God in the sense that he was to have dominion over the earth and every creature just as God does and in another sense, Adam would reflect the image of God by working just as God works.

Genesis 2:16

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely.’”

“You may eat freely”: (1) Qal infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *`akhal* (pronounced: aw-kal) (2) 2nd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *`akhal*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 2:16 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus indicating that the Lord commanded Adam that he could eat from “absolutely” any tree in the garden.

Genesis 2:17

“but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a literal tree. There was nothing inherently evil about the tree since the Lord created it but rather it was Adam and the Woman’s attitude towards the Lord’s prohibition attached to the tree, which was evil.

The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was the only tree in the garden that had a prohibition attached to it, which indicates that the Lord wanted to test the obedience of Adam. The fact

that the tree was named the “**tree of the knowledge of good and evil**” indicates that evil was already in God’s creation and that there was a rival kingdom in God’s creation, namely, Satan. Evil is independence from God as a result of disobedience to His commands.

“**Good**” refers to obedience to God’s will whereas “**evil**” refers to that which is disobedient to God’s will and is independent of Him. According to Genesis 3:22, as a result of disobeying the Lord and eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and his wife, like God, were able to “distinguish” between that which is according to God’s will and that which was not.

Genesis 3:22a, “Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil.’”

Therefore, if Adam and his wife never ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would have never experienced evil and the distinction between what is according to God’s will and what is not.

By eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and his wife and their children were brought into bondage to Satan and his kingdom whereas if they obeyed the Lord and did not eat from this tree, they would have been free in the truest sense meaning they would be free to serve God exclusively.

Eating from the tree of life would not have given Adam eternal life, which is the very life of God but rather would have perpetuated the life of his physical body since the soul is created to live forever and according to Genesis 3:22, eating from this tree results in living forever.

Genesis 3:22b, “and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.”

Eternal life is received as a gift of God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Jn. 3:16-18; Eph. 2:8-9). Therefore, eating from the tree of life would not give Adam eternal life.

According to Revelation 22, the tree of life will be present in the New Jerusalem providing believers greater capacity to enjoy the blessings of the eternal state in their resurrection bodies.

Adam and his wife never did eat from the tree of life since their physical bodies experienced decay after disobeying the Lord and did not live forever. But, it appears that Adam and his wife were totally occupied with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because it was the only tree in the garden with a prohibition attached to it.

“You will surely die”: (1) Qal infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *muth* (pronounced: mooth) (2) 2nd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *muth*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 2:17 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus indicating that the Lord warned Adam that if he disobeyed the command not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would “surely” die spiritually. So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “dying, you shall die” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “you shall surely die.”

When the Lord said to Adam that he would “surely die” if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord meant that he would enter into “real spiritual death,” which is separation from God. When the Lord says you shall surely die He does “not” mean he would die physically since Adam lived to be 930 years old according to Genesis 5:5.

The fact that Adam and his wife died spiritually and were separated from the Lord is illustrated in Genesis 3:6-8.

Genesis 3:6-8

“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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”

“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from

the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

Not only did God tell Adam to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but also He told him *why*, which is that he would die spiritually meaning he would be separated from God for his disobedience.

The fact that the Lord told Adam why he cannot eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil demonstrates God’s love and concern for Adam and that He had his best interests in mind. The Lord put the tree of life right beside the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in order to give Adam and his wife a choice between Himself and Satan, between His will or against it, dependence upon Him for independence from Him.

To eat of the tree of life was to choose to live under God’s authority in dependence upon Him whereas to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was to choose not live under God’s authority in independence from Him. Satan desires to live independently of his Creator and believes he is justified in doing so and to disobey the Lord’s command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was tantamount to agreeing with Satan and rebelling against God.

God permitted Adam to rebel and disobey Him, like He did with Satan in order that He might manifest His great grace and love for His both men and angels. If Adam and Satan never rebelled against God, angels and men would never know the depths of God’s grace and love for them since grace is for the undeserving and His love is able to love those who are His enemies.

The prohibition indicated that Adam was a free moral agent meaning he had the freedom to either obey or disobey God’s will and just as God did not hide from Adam the consequence of disobedience, neither did He hide away the tree of the knowledge of good and evil itself. God wants us to obey Him because we love Him and not because we are forced to do so.

The fall of Adam and the fall of Satan gave God an opportunity to treat both men and angels in grace and love so that they might have a reason to love and obey Him and not because they have to avoid being punished, even though a holy God has

every right to demand obedience from His creatures and punish them for obedience.

God who is holy and cannot tolerate sin is justified in throwing His creatures into the lake of fire for rebelling against Him but also God, who as to His nature, is love, did everything He could to prevent any of His creatures from going to the lake of fire forever and ever for their rebellion against Him.

The fact that God did not immediately deposit Satan and Adam in the lake of fire for their disobedience is incontrovertible evidence that God loves His creatures and desires none of them to go to the lake of fire.

The fact that God the Father sent His Son into the world to become a human being to satisfy His righteous demands that the sin of angels and men be judged is also incontrovertible evidence that God loves His creatures.

The fact that God the Son became a human being and suffered not only physically but also died spiritually for both men and angels is also incontrovertible evidence that God loves His creatures. Therefore, God is not responsible for any of His creatures going to the lake of fire for failing to comply to the standards of His holiness but rather, men and angels are responsible for their own doom since God did everything He could to prevent their suffering forever and ever in the lake of fire.

Genesis 2:18-25 records for us the creation of the woman and the construction of her physical body from Adam's physical body in order to provide for Adam a partner who would help in ruling over every living creature as well as to populate the earth and rule over it. Remember, Genesis 2 gives us more details concerning the sixth day of restoration, which is recorded in Genesis 1:24-31.

In Genesis 2:18-25, Moses gives us more information regarding the creation of Adam and the Woman and in particular the formation of their biological life, Adam's from the dust of the ground and the woman's from the biological life of Adam. Also, in Genesis 2:18-25, we have recorded for us the Lord establishing the institution of marriage.

Genesis 2:18

“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’”

Corrected translation of **Genesis 2:18**, **“Next, the Lord God said, ‘it is not good for the man to be alone, I will form out of existing material for his benefit a helper as his counterpart.’”**

“**Not good**” does “not” mean that it was evil that Adam was alone but rather it means that he was not complete in the sense that he did not have companionship with someone who was of his own species.

In the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are co-equal, co-infinite and co-eternal, sharing the same nature and share perfect and perpetual fellowship with one another. Among the angels, there is companionship since there is more than one angel.

In the animal kingdom, each species of living creature has both a male and female counterpart. Yet, Adam was the only category of living creatures that did not have companionship and among all of God's creatures with the exception of the angels (there are no male and female sexes among the angels), did not have a female counterpart.

“**I will make**” is the verb *`asah* (hC*u*), which means, “to form out of existing material.”

The Lord would produce the physical body of the woman from a portion of Adam's side.

“**Helper**” is the noun *`ezer* (rz#u@) (pronounced ay-zer), which indicates that the woman was designed to be Adam's “partner” in accomplishing the task that he was given by the Lord to populate the earth with human beings and to rule over each and every creature and the earth itself (cf. Gen. 1:26, 28).

Genesis 2:19

“Out of the ground the LORD God formed (*yatsar* “to produce from existing material”) every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 2:19, “Consequently, the Lord God constructed from the ground each and every creature of the field as well as each and every bird of the air. Then, He brought to the man in order to see what name he would designate to them. Consequently, whatever name the man designated to these living creatures that was its name.”

As with the soul of Adam, the soul of marine and animal life and the birds were *bara*, “created out of nothing or non-existing material.”

The “physical bodies” of animal and marine life and the birds as well as mankind was *yatsar*, “to form out of existing material,” namely, the earth.

The same elements found in the earth are found in the physical bodies of animal, marine and bird life as well as the physical body of human beings. The verb *bara* in Genesis 1:21 indicates that the soul of marine and animal life and the birds was created out of non-existing material whereas the verb *yatsar* in Genesis 1:24 and 2:19 and the verb *ʿasah* in Genesis 1:25 indicates that the physical bodies of marine and animal life and the birds were produced out of existing material, namely, the earth.

Genesis 1:21-25

“Next, God created out of nothing (*bara*) the great reptiles. Also, He created out of nothing each and every living creature: those, which crawl, those, which the waters teem with, each of them according to their own species.

Also, He created out of nothing each and every winged bird according to their own species and then God observed that it was perfect.”

“Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth (*yatsa*) living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind’; and it was so.”

“God produced (*ʿasah*) the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind, and everything that creeps on the ground after its kind; and God saw that it was good.”

Genesis 2:20

“The man gave names to all the cattle (*b^ehemah* “domestic animals”), and to the birds of the sky,

and to every beast (*chayyath* “wild animals”) of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 2:20, “Thus, the man designated names to each and every domestic animal and to the birds of the air and to each and every wild animal of the field but for man there was not found a helper as his counterpart.”

By designating names to each and every living creature on the land and in the air, Adam was exercising the delegated authority that the Lord had given him.

To the Hebrew mind, giving a name to something involves giving a designation that is expressive of its character and nature. The names that Adam designated to each and every living creature were appropriate and accurate description of each creature.

The fact that the Lord brought each and every living creature to Adam in order to give them names was the Lord’s way of revealing to Adam his need since Adam would see that all these living creatures came in pairs, male and female and yet he did not have a female counterpart. As one after another of the animals passed before Adam, no doubt in pairs male and female, he could not help but be impressed with his own uniqueness. He would discern that he was superior in ability but also he would see he was very much alone. Adam would find that he had nothing in common with the animals and that there was none like him and thus none of the animals could provide fellowship for him or companionship.

Adam, of all God’s creatures, was really alone and the Lord said that this was not good or beneficial to Adam since Adam was a social being that was created in the image and likeness of God who is a social being since God is three persons who have the same divine essence. Therefore, the Lord set out to create a suitable companion for him that would be a perfect complement to him and would help him rule over the works of God’s hands.

Genesis 2:21

“So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 2:21, “Then, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, thus he slept and He surgically removed a portion of his side and then He closed up the place with flesh.”

The Lord administered a divine anesthetic to Adam, which caused him to be unconscious enabling the Lord to surgically remove “not” a rib but a portion of his side.

“**One of his ribs**”: (1) Number *echadh* (dj* a#), “portion” (2) Preposition *min* (im!), “from” (3) Feminine plural form of the noun *tsela* (ul*x@), “side” (4) 3rd person masculine singular pronomial suffix, which functions as a possessive pronoun meaning, “his.”

The noun *tsela* means, “side” and does not refer to a rib of Adam although the word does imply that the bone of a rib was taken from him by the Lord.

In Genesis 2:21, the noun *tsela* refers to the side of Adam’s torso indicating that the Lord did not simply take out a rib but rather He removed a portion of Adam’s side, which would include skin, flesh, blood, nerves and of course bone.

In Genesis 2:21, the number *echadh* is used as an indefinite article meaning “a portion of something,” thus the Lord built the physical body of the woman from a “portion” of the side of Adam’s torso.

Genesis 2:22

“The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 2:22, “Then, the Lord God built this portion of his side, which He had surgically removed from the man up into a woman. Then, He brought her to the man.”

“**Fashioned**” is the verb *banah* (hn*B*), which means, “to build” indicating that the Lord “constructed” the physical body of the woman from the biological life of Adam.

Like Adam, the woman’s soul was modeled after the image of God, which is indicated by the use of the verb *asah* in Genesis 1:26.

Genesis 1:26, “Next, God decreed let Us model man in Our image, according to Our likeness.

Consequently, they will rule over the fish in the various bodies of water and over the birds in the earth’s atmosphere and over the animal kingdom and over the entire earth and over each and every creeper-crawler, those which crawl upon the earth.”

Like Adam, the woman’s soul was created out of nothing, which is indicated by the use of the Hebrew verb *bara* in Genesis 1:27.

Genesis 1:27, “Consequently, God created out of nothing the essence of man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him out of nothing. Male and female, He created them out of nothing.”

The fact that the soul of Adam and the woman were both created out of nothing indicates that the woman was not intellectually inferior to Adam but rather she was his equal and a perfect complement to him. The woman was not merely an extension of the man but possessed her own individuality since her soul was also created out of nothing in the image of God. She was unique like Adam and unlike the animals, had the capacity to be a companion to Adam and provide fellowship for him that was not only beneficial to him but also to her.

Together, the man and the woman were unique in God’s creation and were a dynamic couple superior to all of God’s creatures on planet earth and were designed to rule together over the earth.

Notice also, that Adam was created first and then Eve thus constituting a divine order between the sexes meaning that the man was designed to be the authority over the woman even though she was his equal.

1 Timothy 2:12, 13

“But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet.”

“For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve.”

Principle: You are not “inferior” to authority by submitting to authority and you are not “superior” to those under your authority by being in a position of authority.

1 Corinthians 11:1-12

“Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.”

“Now I praise you because you remember me in everything and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.”

“But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

“Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head.”

“But every woman who has her head uncovered (a symbol of the husband’s authority over her) while praying or prophesying disgraces her head, for she is one and the same as the woman whose head is shaved.”

“For if a woman does not cover her head, let her also have her hair cut off; but if it is disgraceful for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, let her cover her head.”

“For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man.”

“For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man.”

“for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”

“Therefore the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.”

“However, in the Lord, neither is woman independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.”

“For as the woman originates from the man, so also the man has his birth through the woman; and all things originate from God.”

Genesis 2:23

“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.’”

Notice that Adam receives the woman with delight.

Proverbs 18:22, “He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.”

Proverbs 31:10, “An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels.”

Adam immediately recognized that this woman was his partner and equal.

In Genesis 2:24, Moses added God’s application of this to Moses’ day, which is also applicable in the 21st century.

“**Woman**” is the noun *ishshah* (hv*a!), which denotes the woman as the physical counterpart of man and is used in the sense of a wife to whom the man is to be completely committed.

The directive will of God is that marriage was originally designed to be a life long commitment but the permissive will of God has permitted divorce because of the fallen nature of man.

Matthew 19:3, “Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, ‘Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?’”

Matthew 19:4-12

“And He answered and said, ‘Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.’”

“and said, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH?’”

“So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

“They said to Him, ‘Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?’”

“He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.’”

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

“The disciples said to Him, ‘If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.’”

“But He said to them, ‘Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.’”

“For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are also eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept this, let him accept it.”

Genesis 2:24

“For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

“**Joined**” is the verb *davaq* (q̄b^D*), which expresses the concept of clinging to someone with affection and loyalty, which finds its expression in sexual intercourse.

The phrase “**become one flesh**” refers to the fact that there was a complete identification of personality between Adam and the woman in interests, pursuits, which was consummated in sexual intercourse.

Genesis 2:25

“And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.”

The fact that Adam and Ishshah were not embarrassed about being naked is an expression of their sinless perfection at this particular time. Sin always makes a person self-conscious.

Genesis 3

In Genesis 3:1, Moses records that Satan indwelt a snake in order to disguise himself so that he might deceive Eve in the garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:1

“Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had

made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’”

“**Serpent**” is the noun *nachash* (v̄j*ṛ*), which refers to a literal snake. According to Genesis 3:14, this snake had legs but after the Fall of Adam, the Lord cursed this snake saying it would go on its belly and will eat dust all the days of its life, thus implying that it was not created to go about on its belly and therefore had legs.

Genesis 3:14, “The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life.”

According to 2 Corinthians 11:3 and Revelation 20:2, Satan indwelt this serpent and through this serpent disguised himself to deceive Eve.

2 Corinthians 11:3, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

Revelation 20:2, “And he laid hold of the dragon, the serpent of old, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.”

Satan indwelt this literal snake in order to disguise himself and deceive Eve.

2 Corinthians 11:15, “Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.”

Satan is a person since he possesses the traits of personality demonstrating intelligence (2 Cor. 11:3), emotions (Rev. 12:17, anger; Luke 22:31, desire) and volition (Isa. 14:12-14; 2 Tim. 2:26). Satan is referred to as a person in both Old and New Testaments (Job 1; Matt. 4:1-12).

The Lord Jesus Christ created Satan perfect (Ezek. 28:12). Satan and is a spirit being (Eph. 6:12), and he is not omniscient, omnipotent or omnipresent like God but rather he has limitations and is accountable to God and cannot do anything he wants (Job 1-2). He can be resisted and made to flee (Jam. 4:7), but only by the strength of God made available to believers in Christ (Eph. 6:10-18).

Ezekiel 28:12-19 and Isaiah 14:12-14 teach that he rebelled against God and Revelation 12:4 teaches that one-third of God's angels followed him in that rebellion.

Ezekiel 28:12, "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, you had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.'"

"**Seal of Perfection**" is the Hebrew *chatham*, which means, "the 'touchstone of symmetry'" and indicates that Satan, in his un-fallen state, could be looked to as one who upheld, embodied and represented perfect divine standards.

"**Full of wisdom**" is composed of the Hebrew adjective *male*, "full," and the noun *chokmah*, "wisdom."

The adjective *male* is used figuratively indicating a high degree of wisdom by which Satan in eternity past, before his fall was characterized and indicates that Satan did not reject God out of ignorance but to the contrary, he was the wisest of God's creatures until he perverted that wisdom (Ezek.28:17).

"**Perfect in beauty**" is composed of the Hebrew adjective *kalil*, "perfect," and the noun *yophi*, "beauty." Satan before his fall in eternity past was the epitome of beauty.

Ezekiel 28:13, "You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared."

This "**Eden**" in Ezekiel 28:13 refers to the original garden of Eden on the original planet earth before the earth's renovation in Genesis 1:3 and following. Though he was the premier creature in a utopian setting, Satan was not content. It is a tragic irony that through his rebellion he has exchanged a perfect environment for eternal place in the lake of fire, and is leading his followers to share his fate (Matt.25:41).

The precious stones mentioned in this verse are indeed additional manifestations of Satan's beauty, but it is likely that they also mark him out as the one who represented the angels before God. The nine stones mentioned in this context bear a striking similarity to those placed on the high priest's breastplate (Ex.28:17-21; 39:10-14).

The nine jewels mentioned in Ezekiel 28:13 that Satan wore are comparable to the 12 jewels found on the breastplate of the high priest of Israel, where each jewel represented 1 of the 12 tribes liable for military service.

Satan in eternity past before his rebellion was the high priest of God ruling over these 9 divisions or tribes of angels just as the high priest in Israel presided over the 12 tribes of Israel. Revelation 12:4 reveals that one third of the angels fell, thus indicating that three angelic divisions in the Lord's military rebelled.

Revelation 12:4, "And his tail swept away a third of the stars of heaven and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she gave birth he might devour her child."

These three angelic divisions are arranged in rank, thus mimicking the Trinity.

Ephesians 6:12, "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places."

Ezekiel 28:14, "You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire."

"**Anointed**" is the Hebrew adjective *mimshach*, which describes Satan as one who God conferred divine power to in order to carry out his duties.

"**Cherub**" is the Hebrew noun *keruv*, which indicates that Satan took the lead in worshipping God and acting as an intermediary for God and perhaps most significantly, indicates that he controlled access into the presence of God.

"**Who covers**" refers to the fact that Satan's original position can thus be described as that of

the ultimate "imperial guard", charged with warding off all that is profane from the perfect holiness of God.

Ezekiel 28:15-19

"You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you."

"By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire."

"Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, that they may see you."

"By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries. Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; It has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth in the eyes of all who see you."

"All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; You have become terrified and you will cease to be forever."

Isaiah 14:12, "How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!"

"**Star of the morning, son of the dawn**" (English transliteration from the Hebrew: *Helel Ben-Shachar*) is a title, which speaks of Satan's role in reflecting the glory of God.

"**Star of the morning**" (*helel*) literally means, "shining one" is translated in the LXX as "light bearer" and by the Latin Vulgate as "Lucifer".

"**Son of the dawn**" (*Ben-Shachar*) is an apt rendering of this title, for it denotes a heavenly body so brilliant that it can be seen even in daylight.

As the prime creature of the original Eden, a place without darkness (for darkness did not exist before Satan's fall), Satan was the foremost representative

of God's splendor, reflecting, for all angelic kind to behold, the brilliant glory of their Creator. It is a tragic irony that through his own choice he has now become the ruler of the domain of darkness (Eph.6:12; Col.1:13).

Far from reflecting God's glory, he now opposes it in every way, but his ultimate destiny is to have his light extinguished forever (Jude 6, 13).

Isaiah 14:13, 14

"But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.'"

"I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High."

So we can conclude from a study of Ezekiel 28 and Isaiah 14 that Satan was the most talented, attractive and personable creature to come from the hand of God (Ezek. 28:12; 2 Cor. 11:14). His force of persuasion is as compelling today as when he convinced one third of all the angels to join his prehistoric revolution against God (Rev. 12:4a).

Satan's fall and his leadership of myriad angels in revolt started the prehistoric warfare called the angelic conflict which continues today and will be concluded only with the final judgment at the end of human history.

According to Matthew 25:41 Satan was sentenced to the Lake of Fire for his rebellion but he appealed the sentence.

Matthew 25:41, "Then He will also say to those on His left, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

We can accurately infer that Satan was allowed by God to appeal his sentence since the sentence has not been immediately executed and, in fact, will not be carried out until the end of human history (Rev. 20:10).

Also we can infer that Satan was allowed by God to appeal his sentence since the Scriptures states that Satan is the "**prince of the power of air**" (Eph. 2:3), and the "**god of this world**" (2 Cor. 4:4).

The elapse of time between the sentence and its execution indicates that human history is part of this momentous trial, the appeal trial of Satan.

Satan will be imprisoned for a thousand years at the 2nd Advent of Christ according to Revelation 20:1-3 before the millennial reign begins (Rev. 20:1-3). Satan will be released from prison after the millennium and will immediately start a rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ (Rev. 20:7-10), which God will put down decisively and then finally Satan's sentence will be executed.

The words "**devil**" and "**Satan**" are not names but titles, both of which mean "accuser" or "adversary" as an attorney accuses someone in court and is further evidence for the appeal trial of Satan.

The principle stratagem of the devil is lies and deception.

1 John 5:19, "We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one."

Satan employed the strategy of deception against the woman in the Garden of Eden. The devil's purpose for deceiving the human race is to divert worship from the Lord Jesus Christ and to himself.

Genesis 3:1-7 records three different steps that lead to sin and rebellion against God:

(1) Added to God's Word: God did not say that Adam could not eat from any tree in the garden but rather He prohibited eating from only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 3:1); God did not say that Adam could not "touch" the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but rather He said do not eat from it (Gen. 2:15-17)

(2) Altering God's Word: God did not say that they would die if they touched the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but rather the Lord said they would die if they ate from it, which Eve omits.

(3) Denying God's Word: Satan blatantly God called a liar and contradicted what God said to Adam by saying "**You shall not surely die**" (Gen. 3:4).

"**More crafty**" is the adjective *`arum* (SWRu*) (pronounced: aw-room) is used in a negative sense to describe the "craftiness" of the snake and forms a word play with the adjective *`arom* (SW{ru*) (pronounced: aw-rome), "**naked**" that is used in Genesis 2:25 to describe the sinless innocence of Adam and Eve.

The two words describe a contrast between the innocent vulnerability of Adam and his wife and the craftiness of Satan.

"Craftiness" describes the skill or ability used for evil purposes, cunning, deceit, guile." Satan's craftiness is demonstrated in addressing Adam's wife and not Adam and asking her a question. Satan approached the woman rather than Adam because the woman was the "weaker" of the two in the sense that she is a responder and is therefore susceptible to flattery and deception.

1 Peter 3:7, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

Also, Satan approached the woman rather than Adam since Adam was the one who received the prohibition directly from the Lord to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and not the woman since she was not created as of yet (Gen. 2:15-25). Therefore, the woman heard about the command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil directly from Adam rather than from the Lord. She also would be with Adam when the Lord at the end of the day reminded Adam of the prohibition (Gen. 3:8). It was Adam's responsibility to relate the prohibition accurately to the woman since God delegated him as the authority over her.

Her failure to accurately convey the Word of the Lord back to Satan was in essence Adam's failure as the head of the marriage since she received the command from him and he was right there while she was conversing with Satan according to the phrase "**she gave also to her husband with her**" in Genesis 3:6.

Adam kept silent the entire time that his wife was being tempted by the devil, thus he failed in his responsibility to protect and care for his wife.

God did not say that Adam could not eat from “**any**” tree in the garden but only that they could not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17).

Satan deliberately distorted the Word of the Lord in order to get Adam’s wife to doubt God and of course, ultimately to deceive her into disobeying God and then Adam would follow.

Satan employed this tactic of distorting the Word of God when tempting the impeccable human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ in the wilderness (Mt. 4:1-11), but the Lord Jesus Christ defeated Satan and resisted the temptation to sin by having a precise and accurate knowledge of the Word of God.

Satan is emphasizing God’s prohibition rather than His provision to eat from any tree in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and he did this in order to make God appear harsh.

Genesis 3:2

“The woman said to the serpent, ‘From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat.’”

Genesis 3:3

“but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.’”

The woman is correct in identifying that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil had a prohibition attached to it but she was incorrect in adding to the prohibition by saying she was prohibiting from touching it. The Lord did not say that they could not touch it but rather that they could not eat from it and this failure to accurately convey what the Lord prohibited gave Satan a foothold and she was now open to deception.

Failure to accurately understand and apply the Word of God leads to deception from Satan.

Genesis 3:4

“The serpent said to the woman, ‘You surely will not die!’”

After hearing Eve inaccurately convey what the Lord said in the prohibition, Satan blatantly calls God a liar by saying that they would not die if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

John 8:44, “You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”

Genesis 3:5

“For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

Not only does Satan deny the Word of God and calls God a liar but he also casts doubt upon the character of God suggesting that God was envious and jealous, holding them back from their destiny. Of course, Satan is envious and jealous of God and is therefore involved in “projecting” meaning he is ascribing to God his failure of jealousy and envy of God (cf. James 3:14-16).

Both Adam and his wife had not reason to doubt God’s love and goodness since like Satan, their entire existence originated directly from God who created them. God had their best interests in mind and in fact, by prohibiting Adam and his wife from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God was protecting them from evil and calamity. God prohibits us from doing things in order to protect us from misfortune rather than to prevent us from enjoyment.

Adam and his wife had no reason whatsoever to accept the suggestions of this stranger (Satan) over obedience to the commands of their loving and caring Lord. God had withheld no good thing from Adam and Eve and yet they rebelled against Him like Satan, which is a sin of the worst kind, namely, ungratefulness.

Satan has successfully gotten the woman to mistrust and be suspicious of God.

Also, Satan states that if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that she will be like God knowing good and evil, which is

ridiculous since God knows about evil but not through personal experience, which would be the case when the woman disobeyed God.

Genesis 3:6

“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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.”

The steps leading to Adam and his wife disobeying the Lord by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil are described in Genesis 3:6, which correspond to the description given by the apostle John in 1 John 2:15-16.

1 John 2:15, 16

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

“**Lust of the flesh**” is a temptation appealing to the physical appetite and was used against the Woman and is recorded in **Genesis 3:6a**, “**When the woman saw that the tree was good for food.**”

“**Lust of the eyes**” is a temptation appealing to personal gain and was used against the Woman and is recorded in **Genesis 3:6b**, “**that it was a delight to the eyes.**”

“**Boastful pride of life**” is a temptation appealing to power and glory and was used against the Woman and is recorded in **Genesis 3:6c**, “**that the tree was desirable to make one wise.**”

Notice that Adam was with his wife the entire time that Satan tempted her and remained silent throughout the entire conversation. Paul states that Eve was deceived and not Adam who knew what he was doing.

1 Timothy 2:14, “And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”

Adam knowingly ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because he chose his relationship with his wife over his relationship with God, which is illustrated by the fact that he listened to his wife rather than obeying God.

Genesis 3:7

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.”

“**The eyes of both of them were opened**” means that Adam and his wife had a knowledge of sin and evil through personal experience and did not make them like God as Satan claimed it would but rather produced guilt in their souls.

They became aware of their guilt and had nothing to hide their guilt so they attempted to hide themselves from God and cover their genitalia with loin coverings sewed from fig leaves.

The loin coverings not only were a manifestation of their alienation from God but also from each other. The sewing of fig leaves together in order to make loin coverings for themselves to cover and ease their guilt was an act of self-righteous arrogance since only God can solve the problem of guilt through the forgiveness of sins, which is available through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

Instead of seeking out God and confessing their guilt, they attempted to conceal their guilt from both God and themselves (1 John 1:8-10).

It is interesting that the only tree that our Lord cursed was the fig tree recorded in Matthew 21:18-19 and He did this not only to teach that Israel had rejected Him as Messiah but to relate God’s attitude towards the self-righteous actions of Adam and his wife.

Adam’s sin in the garden brought a curse not only on the entire human of which he is the “federal” head but it also brought a curse on the earth itself.

Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (when Adam sinned).”

Romans 8:20, “For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope.”

The temptations of the Lord Jesus in the wilderness correspond to that which Eve was subject to in the Garden of Eden.

Satan appealed to the physical appetite of Eve in Genesis 3:1, “**You may eat of any tree**” and the Lord Jesus in Matthew 4:3, “**You may eat by changing stones into bread.**”

He appealed to personal gain with Eve in Genesis 3:4, “**you shall not die**” and with the Lord Jesus in Matthew 4:6, “**You will not hurt Your foot.**”

Satan appealed to power or glory with Eve in Genesis 3:5, “**You will be like God**” and with the Lord Jesus in Matthew 4:8-9, “**You will have all the world’s kingdoms.**”

Genesis 3:8

“They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”

The sound of the Lord God walking in the garden is a theophany, which is a theological term used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

The manner in which it is stated that the Lord God came walking in the garden in the cool of the day indicates that this was a normal event, perhaps a daily appointment time at which the Lord met with Adam and his wife for fellowship.

“**Sound**” is the noun *qol* (לִו | {Q}) (pronounced: kole), which when used in relation to a living being means, “voice,” thus, Adam and his wife heard the Lord voice of the preincarnate Christ.

“**Walking**” is the verb *halakh* (El^h*) (pronounced: haw-lak), which is in the hithpael (reflexive) form indicating that the preincarnate Christ was “walking about” the garden at the end of the day.

“**Cool of the day**” refers to the end of the day at sunset when temperatures fall.

Adam and his wife hid in fear since according to Genesis 2:17, the Lord had warned Adam that if he disobeyed His command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, then he would surely die.

Genesis 2:17

“but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

When the Lord said to Adam that he would “surely die” if he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord meant that he would enter into “real spiritual death,” which is separation from God.

When the Lord says you shall surely die He does “not” mean he would die physically since Adam lived to be 930 years old according to Genesis 5:5.

The fact that Adam and his wife died spiritually and were separated from the Lord is illustrated in Genesis 3:6-8.

The fact that Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden demonstrates that sin not only results in loss of fellowship with the Lord but also guilt and fear.

Adam and his wife’s actions after disobeying the Lord are an implicit admission of guilt.

Genesis 3:9

“Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, ‘Where are you?’”

The Lord knew that Adam and his wife had disobeyed Him since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history.

The Lord asked Adam where He was because He wanted Adam to confess his guilt and to make Adam aware of his need for forgiveness and a Savior. The fact that the Lord asked Adam where he was even though He knew what Adam had done and could have thrown him into the lake of

fire demonstrates that the Lord is manifesting His love and mercy and grace.

God permitted Adam to rebel and disobey Him, like He did with Satan in order that He might manifest His great grace and love for both men and angels. If Adam and Satan never rebelled against God, angels and men would never know the depths of God's grace and love for them since grace is for the undeserving and His love is able to love those who are His enemies.

The fall of Adam and the fall of Satan gave God an opportunity to treat both men and angels in grace and love so that they might have a reason to love and obey Him and not because they have to avoid being punished, even though a holy God has every right to demand obedience from His creatures and punish them for obedience.

God who is holy and cannot tolerate sin is justified in throwing His creatures into the lake of fire for rebelling against Him but also God, who as to His nature, is love, did everything He could to prevent any of His creatures from going to the lake of fire forever and ever for their rebellion against Him.

The fact that God did not immediately deposit Satan and Adam in the lake of fire for their disobedience is incontrovertible evidence that God loves His creatures and desires none of them to go to the lake of fire.

The fact that God the Father sent His Son into the world to become a human being to satisfy His righteous demands that the sin of angels and men be judged is also incontrovertible evidence that God loves His creatures.

Notice that the Lord initiated a reconciliation by seeking out Adam and his wife and not vice versa, which is a demonstration of God's love.

Romans 3:11, "There is none who seeks for God."

The Lord not only sought out the first two sinners in the human race but He seeks out the entire human race without exception and distinction since He desires all men to be saved (John 3:16-18; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Genesis 3:10

"He said, 'I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself.'"

Adam, like all sinners, is fearful being in the presence of God since he stands guilty and condemned before an infinitely holy God. Adam, like all sinners, is estranged from God and seeks to avoid contact with Him. This is the natural result of spiritual death.

Adam response that he hid himself because he was naked was a lie but rather he hid himself because he felt guilty that he disobeyed the Lord's prohibition. Therefore, Adam is not being honest with the Lord who because He is omniscient can see right through his lie.

The fact that Adam does not come clean with the Lord and confess that he disobeyed results in a guilty conscience. The application for us as believers is that we must confess our sins so that we might not be wracked with guilt that is the natural result of sin.

Psalms 32:5, "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin."

Genesis 3:11

"And He said, 'Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?'"

The divine interrogation continues in order to bring Adam to an admission of guilt so that he might be restored to fellowship.

Proverbs 28:13, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

The Lord's first question is designed to draw attention to the fact that something must have happened to make Adam aware of his nakedness and that he must have done something to make him aware of his nakedness.

As soon as Adam's thoughts have been led to see that this admission is inevitable, the Lord's next question is a direct one designed to drive Adam to still a more inescapable admission of his guilt. The

Lord's is convicting Adam of his guilt in order that he might see his need of a Savior and forgiveness.

Genesis 3:12

“The man said, ‘The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate.’”

Adam's fallen state due to his sin and disobedience further manifests itself in his making excuses and blaming the Lord for giving him his wife. By blaming the Lord for giving him his wife, Adam is accusing the Lord of tempting him to sin, which is impossible since God cannot be tempted by evil because He is holy.

James 1:13-15

“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”

“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”

“Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

By blaming the Lord for giving him his wife, Adam is not taking responsibility for his actions. Adam cannot justify his sin by blaming the Lord for giving him his wife since Adam made the decision to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He could have said no to his wife but instead he went along with her in her sin.

Once Adam recognized his wife as a great blessing but now, after disobeying the Lord, he considers her a curse. Adam's excuse is so lame that the Lord doesn't even dignified it with a response.

Proverbs 26:4, “Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will also be like him.”

Genesis 3:13

“Then the LORD God said to the woman, ‘What is this you have done?’ And the woman said, ‘The serpent deceived me, and I ate.’”

Just like Adam, his wife failed to take responsibility for her actions and instead blamed

the serpent for deceiving her. Just like Adam, his wife could have rejected eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil but instead she chose to disobey. Unlike Adam though, his wife did not attempt to deny that she had sinned but in fact admitted her guilt to the Lord.

The Lord does not question the devil who used the serpent to disguise himself since according to Matthew 25:41, the devil has already been convicted of his rebellion. Furthermore, the Lord does not question Satan since this temptation of Adam and his wife was a part of his appeal trial where Satan was attempting to justify his rebellion and independence from God.

In his appeal trial, Satan is attempting to demonstrate that God does not love His creatures and that he is justified in living independently of God and that disobedience to God is a viable and justified alternative to being obedient to God. By getting Adam and his wife to sin against God, then Satan would have witnesses that support his argument.

Satan does not believe that God loves His creatures since God sentenced him to the lake of fire forever for his rebellion and by getting Adam and his wife to sin against God, Satan presumptuously and erroneously believes that he will have demonstrated this to be the case. But, Satan's plan backfires on him since the fall of Adam and his wife provided God an opportunity to demonstrate a side of Himself that would never be revealed if Satan and Adam had never sinned, namely, His love, which is able to love His enemies and do good to those who are unworthy and undeserving.

Genesis 3:14-19 records the consequences of Adam and his wife failure to obey the Lord's prohibition to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:14

“The LORD God said to the serpent, ‘Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life.’”

The fact that the Lord pronounced a curse on the serpent does not indicate direct culpability on its

part since the serpent is not a moral rational creature that can make decisions to obey or reject the will of God. Rather, the curse was pronounced upon the serpent as a perpetual reminder to the human race of the instrument of its fall and of the final destruction of Satan himself.

When the Lord said that the serpent would eat dust, He does not mean in a literal sense of course, except in the sense that its prey would have to be consumed directly off the ground in front of it. The expression is mainly a graphic figure of speech indicating its humiliating judgment and fall.

God was not unjust in pronouncing this curse upon an innocent animal since He is sovereign and has created each animal to fulfill a specific role in life (Rm. 9:21). God had made the serpent a member of a species which are described in Genesis 1:21 as **“those, which crawl”** and **“creepers-crawlers”** in Genesis 1:24, which would be insects, small reptiles, most amphibians and small mammals and excludes the larger domestic and non-domestic wild animals.

The entire animal kingdom fell under a curse as a result of Adam’s sin even though the animals had not sinned themselves and this was because they were under Adam’s rulership and it was by his sin that death came into the world, infecting everything in that dominion.

Genesis 3:15

“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Genesis 3:15 records the first pronouncement of the gospel of God’s grace as found in the Person and Work of the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The seed of the serpent is not literal since we have already established that Satan disguised himself by indwelling the serpent. Neither is the seed of the serpent referring to fallen angels for such an interpretation does not fit the context and Satan does not father demons. The seed of the serpent does not refer to unregenerate humanity since the phrase **“your seed”** is used in contrast to the phrase **“her seed,”** which refers to one individual, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the

phrase **“your seed”** refers to one individual, namely, the Antichrist who will be the ruler of a ten-nation confederacy constituting a Revived Roman Empire, during Daniel’s 70th week, which is also called by theologians as the **“Tribulation Period.”**

The Antichrist will be the man of sin and yet the son of perdition-literally, the **“seed of the serpent”** just as the Lord Jesus Christ was the Son of Man and the Son of God in one person.

“Her Seed” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the **“Last Adam”** (1 Cor. 15:45) and if so, then, **“your seed”** refers to a single individual as well.

“He (Jesus Christ) shall bruise you (Satan) on the head” is the first prophecy concerning the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ would defeat Satan at the cross by being obedient to the Father’s will with His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross on behalf of all mankind.

This first prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, as the future Deliverer from the bondage of sin and the devil is further developed throughout the rest of Scripture.

The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is the **“seed plot”** of the Virgin Birth and Incarnation of the Son of God (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).

The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is the **“seed plot”** of the Redemption and Salvation of mankind as well as the defeat of Satan, which is developed in further detail in the rest of the Bible (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8).

“You (Satan) shall bruise Him (Christ) on the heel” is a symbolic or figurative reference to the Lord’s suffering and death on the cross, which the Father used as the instrument to destroy the works of the devil.

A blow to the head is much more damaging than a blow to the heel. What Satan did to the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross was only temporary and did not defeat the Lord but what the Lord did to Satan at the cross was to achieve total and complete victory over Satan since the Lord’s death on the cross demonstrated the love of God for all men, which refutes Satan’s argument that God does not love His creatures.

Genesis 3:16

“To the woman He said, ‘I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.’”

God’s judgment on Eve was to increase her pain in childbearing. Her desire or impulse would be toward her husband and he would rule over her, not as a tyrant but in the same sense as the sun rules the day (Gen. 1:16). This, of course, was not God’s original intention but now in Christ the negative aspects of this are removed and the husband and wife are restored to a healthy partnership where the husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her (Eph. 5:22-33) and the wife is to obey and respect her husband as to the Lord.

Also, in Christ there are no gender distinctions meaning there is neither male nor female but all are equal in Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). Because, Eve chose to disobey God and did not eat from the tree of life resulting in immortality, she would now have to bear children, which in one sense was a curse but in another sense opened the door to redemptive history.

The privilege of bearing and raising born-again children delivers women from their loss of leadership as the Fall (1 Tim. 2:12-15). Remember, both Adam and Eve were modeled and created in the image and likeness of God according to Genesis 1:26-27 and together were to rule over every living creature and to rule over the earth and subdue it according to Genesis 1:28.

Eve’s disobedience changed that but the woman’s position of rulership is restored through the baptism of the Spirit, which takes place at the moment she exercises faith alone in Christ alone and gives her equal privilege and equal opportunity to glorify God.

Genesis 3:17

“Then to Adam He said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat from it’; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life.’”

“Cursed is the ground” means the basic material of the physical creation. The elements themselves,

the “dust of the earth,” out of which all things had been formed and produced were brought under the bondage of decay and disintegration.

Genesis 3:18

“Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field.”

Genesis 3:19

“By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

The earth would no longer cooperate with Adam because he sinned and will be insubordinate to Adam because he obeyed his wife.

“By the sweat of your face you will eat bread” means that Adam would have to perform hard labor in order to get the earth to produce food for him. Work was originally designed by the Lord to be a blessing for man but after the Fall, it became a curse (Gen. 3:17-19).

“Till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust and to dust you shall return” refers to the eventual death of Adam’s biological life meaning his physical body.

Remember the human soul whether saved or unsaved does “not” die but lives forever and a person’s attitude towards Jesus Christ determines the soul’s eternal destiny whether the lake of fire or heaven. This curse on Adam also included the entire human race, both male and female, of which Adam is the “federal” head of the old creation and is removed through faith in Christ who is the “federal” head of the “new” creation.

1 Corinthians 15:22, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”

Just as the earth fell under judgment because of Satan’s rebellion in the original pre-Adamic Garden of Eden so the earth fell under judgment because of Adam’s rebellion in the restored Garden of Eden. So the Lord put a curse upon man and on his entire environment would not only force him to recognize the seriousness of his sin as well as his helplessness to deliver himself and his dominion from eventual destruction but also it

would force him to recognize that Satan's tempting promises had been nothing but lies.

This curse on the First Adam will be lifted when the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ returns with church, the sons of God, at His 2nd Advent to deliver Israel from Antichrist and the Tribulational armies in order to establish His millennial reign (Rom. 8:18-22).

In Genesis 3:20-21, Moses records that the Lord clothed Adam and Eve with animal skins that is picture of their salvation, which took place when they exercised faith in the promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15

"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Genesis 3:15 records the first pronouncement of the gospel of God's grace as found in the Person and Work of the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The phrase "**your seed**" refers to the Antichrist who will be the ruler of a ten-nation confederacy constituting a Revived Roman Empire, during Daniel's 70th week, which is also called by theologians as the "Tribulation Period."

"**Her Seed**" refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the "**Last Adam**" (1 Cor. 15:45).

"**He (Jesus Christ) shall bruise you (Satan) on the head**" is the first prophecy concerning the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ would defeat Satan at the cross by being obedient to the Father's will with His voluntary substitutionary spiritual death on the cross on behalf of all mankind.

This first prophecy regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, as the future Deliverer from the bondage of sin and the devil is further developed throughout the rest of Scripture. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is the "seed plot" of the Virgin Birth and Incarnation of the Son of God (Isa. 7:14; Mt. 1:23; John 1:14; 1 Tim. 3:16).

Galatians 4:4, 5

"But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

"so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons."

The prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is the "seed plot" of the Redemption and Salvation of mankind as well as the defeat of Satan, which is developed in further detail in the rest of the Bible (Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; Col. 2:14; Heb. 2:14-15; 1 Jn. 3:8).

"**You (Satan) shall bruise Him (Christ) on the heel**" is a symbolic or a figurative reference to the Lord's suffering and death on the cross, which the Father used as the instrument to destroy the works of the devil.

What Satan did to the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross was only temporary and did not defeat the Lord but what the Lord did to Satan at the cross was to achieve total and complete victory over Satan since the Lord's death on the cross demonstrated the love of God for all men, which refutes Satan's argument that God does not love His creatures.

This first announcement of the gospel of grace through faith in "the Seed" of the woman, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam was couched in a warning of conflict. This prophecy teaches that Satan and his armies will oppose the work of salvation and the salvation of mankind. This prophecy of Genesis 3:15 is God's guarantee to mankind and the angels that Satan would be defeated at the cross by the obedience of the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:15, "When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."

Hebrews 2:14, 15

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

“and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

1 John 3:8, “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.”

In Genesis 3:22-24, we see the Lord driving Adam and his wife out of the Garden of Eden but although Adam and his wife had lost this “temporal” Paradise, they had gained through their faith in the promise of Genesis 3:15 of a Savior an “eternal” Paradise with God in the new heavens and new earth and new Jerusalem.

Though they were under a curse for their disobedience that curse would ultimately be lifted because of their faith in Christ. We saw in Genesis 2:3 that God completed His work of restoring the heavens and the earth by the seventh day, which typifies the millennium and eternal state.

In Genesis 3:15, we read of God beginning a new work on the day that Adam and his wife sinned, namely, the work of salvation, which began with the incarnation of the Son of God and His death, resurrection and session.

Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy concerning the new creation. The old creation, the old heavens and the earth that have been marred by the sin and rebellion of both Satan and Adam will be destroyed and a new heavens and a new earth will be created by God that will be permeated by God’s holiness (Rev. 21-22).

This work of salvation and the new creation will culminate in the creation of the new heavens and new earth.

Genesis 3:20

“Now the man called his wife’s name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living.”

In Genesis 2:23, Adam calls his wife, “**woman**,” which is the noun *ishshah* (hV*a!) but in Genesis 3:20, Adam gives his wife a new name, “**Eve**,” which is the Hebrew proper name *chawwah* (jW{j}) (pronounced: khav-vaw), “life.”

Adam’s faith in the Lord’s promise of Genesis 3:15 to provide him a Savior was expressed in his designating the name “**Eve**” to his wife, which is

the Hebrew proper name *chawwah* (jW{j}) (pronounced: khav-vaw), “life.”

Adam not only had faith that he and his wife would have children but also through this means God would send “the seed of the woman,” the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ to provide salvation, eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:45, “So also it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

The name *chawwah*, “life” looks forward in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ who is the eternal life of God incarnate.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

John 5:24, “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.”

Adam has passed out of real spiritual death and into eternal life through faith in the Lord’s promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15. Hebrews 11:1 defines faith for us.

Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them. Adam trusted in God’s promise of a Savior in Genesis 3:15 even though his circumstances were adverse and was under a curse.

Genesis 3:21

“The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.”

The fact that the Lord made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them foreshadows the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. The Lord God clothed Adam and Eve with skins and in order to provide these skins, animals must have been slain, an animal’s life must have been taken, and blood must have been shed. In this

manner, the Lord provided garments to cover their nakedness and shame due to their sin.

Later, in Old Testament Israel, animal sacrifices were used as a teaching aid for Israel to teach them about the future sacrifice on the cross of the Lamb of God (Jn. 1:29). The animal had to be without spot or blemish portraying the impeccability of the human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The shedding of the animal's blood portrayed the spiritual death of the impeccable human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18, 19

"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers."

"but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

The killing of the innocent animal portrayed the fact that the impeccable human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was our "Substitute" meaning He did in our place.

Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for all of us as a Substitute."

So as Adam and his wife watched the Lord shed the blood of innocent animals to provide garments to clothe their nakedness, they were being taught as to the manner in which their salvation would be provided through the promise "Seed of the woman."

Adam and his wife were taught that forgiveness of sins is provided through the shedding of the animal's blood, which portrays the voluntary spiritual death of the impeccable human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ as our Substitute.

Leviticus 17:12, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement."

Hebrews 9:22, "And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with

blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."

Ephesians 1:7, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

The garments that clothed Adam and his wife's nakedness portray the believer's salvation and the righteousness of Christ that was imputed to him the moment he trusted in Christ as his Savior.

Isaiah 61:10, "I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, my soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

Romans 3:21, 22

"But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets."

"even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction."

2 Corinthians 5:21, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

1 Corinthians 1:30, "But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."

Now, if you recall in Genesis 3:7, Adam and the woman provided loin coverings for themselves apart from God, which portrays human self-righteousness. But here in Genesis 3:20, the Lord is providing clothing for Adam and his wife, which was procured through the sacrifice of an innocent animal, which portrays God's perfect Son and His death on the cross as our Substitute.

This taught them about grace and that they could not earn their salvation or ease their problem of guilt and sin through their own devices but rather it would have to be provided through Another, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

“not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Titus 3:5-7

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.”

“whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.”

“so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

Adam and his wife were given a graphic and horrifying picture through the shedding of the blood of an innocent animal that their salvation and deliverance from Satan and spiritual death would come at a great price, namely, the death of God’s perfect Son.

In Genesis 3:22-24, Moses records for us the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:22

“Then the LORD God said, ‘Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might stretch out his hand, and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.’”

“Us” is a reference to the Trinity who held a council and acknowledged that man knew good and evil.

Adam and his wife knew good and evil in the sense that they now were able to distinguish through experience the distinction between that which is good, obedience to God and evil, disobedience to God and independence from Him, whereas prior to their Fall, they knew by experience only God’s goodness.

Unlike Adam, God does not know evil through experience but rather He is aware of it because He is omniscient.

Eating from the tree of life would not have given Adam eternal life, which is received as a gift of God’s grace through faith alone in Christ alone (Jn. 3:16-18; Eph. 2:8-9). But rather eating from the tree of life would have perpetuated the life of his physical body since the soul is created to live forever and according to Genesis 3:22, eating from this tree results in living forever.

Eating from the tree of life would have prevented the deterioration and decay of their physical bodies, which God wanted to replace with resurrection bodies. Satan wanted Adam to eat from the tree of life after eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil since that would have perpetuated Adam’s fallen nature. Therefore, God employed elect angels to ensure that Adam and his wife did not eat from the tree of life.

Genesis 3:23

“therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken.”

Genesis 3:24

“So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life.”

It seems harsh and cruel of God that He expelled Adam and his wife out of the Garden of Eden but in reality, God again was demonstrating His love, His care and concern for them. If God did not immediately drive Adam and his wife out of the Garden of Eden Satan would have tempted them or they would because of their sin nature be tempted to eat from the tree of life, which would have resulted in their living perpetually in their fallen state. God was protecting them and delivering them from temptation that would have catastrophic implications for them and which He could not resolve.

The Lord expelled Adam and his wife from the Garden of Eden to prevent access to the tree of life and to teach them that God’s holiness cannot tolerate sinners in His presence, which both the tree of life and the Garden were symbols of. Sinner cannot have access to a holy God unless a way has been made possible and that way would

be made possible through the death of the Last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 2:18, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Ephesians 3:12, “in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him.”

Hebrews 10:19, 20

“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus.”

“by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh.”

The “**cherubim**” are elect angels who assigned the task of guarding the divine unapproachable presence and holiness of God, which is symbolized by the tree of life in the Garden of Eden.

In Scripture, the cherubim vindicate the divine righteousness (Ex. 26:1; 36:8) the divine mercy (Ex. 25:22; 37:9) and divine government (1 Sam. 4:4; Ps. 80:1; Ezek. 1:22). In the holy of holies in the Tabernacle in Israel, the Shekinah Glory took residence above the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant between the two cherubim who sat on either side representing the righteousness and justice of God.

The “**flaming sword, which turned in every direction to guard the tree of life**” is a symbol of God’s holiness and judgment.

The term “holiness” has become an obscure term. Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines holiness, “the quality or state of being holy; sanctity.” They define “sanctity”, “sacred or hallowed character.”

One of the definitions that Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary gives for the adjective “holy” is, “entitled to worship or profound religious reverence because of divine character or origin or connection with God or divinity.” Therefore, holiness pertains to the absolute perfection of the divine character.

The flaming sword protecting the presence of the Lord in the Garden of Eden is a symbol of God’s

holiness meaning the absolute eternal perfection of character of the Triune God.

One of the definitions for the noun “character” that Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary provides that applies to the context of our passage is the following: “the aggregate of features and traits that form the apparent individual nature of some person or thing.” Therefore, we can say that the holiness of God is the aggregate of perfect divine attributes that form the nature of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Thus, God’s holiness is related to all of His divine attributes. The holiness of God is simply the harmony of all His perfections or attributes.

Webster’s states that “character” refers especially to “moral qualities, ethical standards, principles and the like.”

If we paraphrase this too and give this a spiritual application, we would say that God’s holiness emphasizes His “perfect moral qualities, ethical standards and principles.”

The perfect character or holiness of God is the excellence of the divine nature. It is the very antithesis to sin, evil, moral blemish or defilement. The Word of God devotes many passages to the holiness or righteousness of God since it is the excellency of His divine nature and because it was attacked by Satan in eternity past and continues to be attacked throughout human history, which is the appeal trial of Satan.

Holiness is used often to describe the Person of God.

Psalm 97:12, “Be glad in the LORD, you righteous ones, and give thanks to His holy name.”

The title “**His Holy Name**” refers to the perfect character of the Person of God.

This absolute perfection of God’s character is celebrated throughout the Scriptures.

Isaiah 6:3, “And one called out to another and said, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory.’”

Revelation 4:8, “And the four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, are full of eyes around and within; and day and night

they do not cease to say, 'HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY, WHO WAS AND WHO IS AND WHO IS TO COME.'"

God swears by the perfect character of His person (Ps. 89:35) because that is a complete expression of Himself than anything else. The holiness or perfect character of God is the perfection of the glory of God and every Person of the Trinity and is the rule of all His actions and relationships with both men and angels.

The Lord Jesus Christ revealed the holiness or character of God during His 1st Advent.

John 1:18, "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

The absolute perfection of God's character was revealed perfectly at the Cross when the impeccable humanity nature of Christ received the imputation of every sin in human history-past, present and future as a our Substitute and was judged for those sins by being separated in His perfect humanity from the Father for those last 3 hours on the Cross (Mt. 27:46).

The holiness of God was manifested at the Cross where the righteousness of God demanded that the sins of both mankind and angels be judged and the justice of God judged the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union as a substitute for these moral rational creatures of His.

So God's abhorrence and intolerance of sin was manifested through the judgment of His impeccable Son. The love of God was also manifested at the Cross through the Father's judgment of His as a Substitute for all mankind (Rm. 5:6-8). While God's holiness demanded the judgment of sin, the holiness of God provided a substitutionary sacrifice for all mankind.

God's holiness expresses His purity of His character or moral perfection and excellence.

The flaming sword symbolized to Adam and his wife and to their children that the absolute and innate holiness or perfect character of God can have nothing to do with sin or sinners unless a perfect sacrifice is provided to satisfy the perfect standards of God's holiness.

God is totally separate from sin and sinners unless a way can be found to constitute them holy and that way has been provided based upon the merits of the impeccable Person and Finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

1 John 2:12, "I am providing information in writing at this particular time for the benefit of all of you, little children in view of the fact that for the benefit of all of you, your sins have been forgiven-past, present and future on the basis of His merit."

The flaming sword protecting access to the tree of life in the Garden of Eden is a symbol of God's holiness indicating that God does not and will not, nor will He ever in the future tolerate sin unless can be found to constitute them holy. The sword is always used of war in the Bible, thus the flaming sword is a symbol that God's holiness requires Him to be at war with sin and sinners.

God has made a peace treaty with the entire human race through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable human nature of Jesus Christ has satisfied the demands of God's holiness that sinners and sin be judged by receiving the imputation of every sin in human history-past, present and future and suffering spiritual death as the Substitute for sinners.

The expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden symbolizes the total depravity of the human race, of which Adam is the federal head. It denotes that the entire human race, which Adam is the federal head, are under real spiritual death meaning that they have no capacity to have fellowship with God and be in His presence.

The cherubim and the flaming sword protecting the presence and holiness of God was stationed in the east where the sun rises because the sun is used in Scripture for the Person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who would satisfy the demands of God's holiness that sin and sinners be judging by dying for sin and in the place of sinners (John 1:9; Mal 4:2)

Malachi 4:2, "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall."

Genesis 4

Genesis 4:1-16 records the first murder in human history, namely, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Cain and Abel typify respectively the unsaved and the saved, self-righteous and the righteous, the soulish and spiritual.

Genesis 4:1

“Now the man had relations (*yadha* (ud[^]y*), which is pronounced yaw-daw and means “to have sexual intercourse”) with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain (Hebrew noun *qayin* (/y!q[^]), which is pronounced kah-yin and means “one gotten, obtained, acquired”), and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.’”

Cain is the firstborn child of humanity, however, he is also infamous in being the first murderer in human history.

The apostle John in 1 John 3 uses him as an example of one who hates his brother.

1 John 3:11, 12

“For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

“not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.”

Eve acknowledges that Cain her first-born was a gift from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Genesis 4:2

“Again, she gave birth to his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.”

“Abel” is the Hebrew proper noun *hevel* (lb#h#), which means, “vanity” and indicates that Eve was thoroughly aware of God’s curse on the world in which they lived. The Lord Jesus Christ testified that Abel was righteous meaning a believer and that he was a prophet according to Matthew 23:35 and Luke 11:50-51.

Genesis 4:3

“So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.”

Genesis 4:4

“Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering.”

Genesis 4:3 reveals that Cain was a farmer whereas Abel was a shepherd. Both men were sinners and approached the Lord with an offering to worship the Lord but only Abel’s offering was accepted since it was presented in faith meaning in obedience to the Lord’s commands whereas Cain’s offering was not accepted because it offered in unbelief, which expressed itself in disobedience.

Hebrews 11:4, “By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.”

Thus, disobedience and rebellion against God and selfishness and sin are the “**way of Cain**” as stated by Jude in Jude 11.

Jude 11, “Woe to them (licentious false teachers)! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.”

The Spirit and the flesh war against one another, thus we have Cain persecuting and murdering his brother Abel who obeyed the Spirit.

Galatians 5:17, “For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.”

Cain was not worshipping the Lord since he did so according to his own rules whereas Abel was worshipping since he obeyed the protocol that the Lord had ordained to approach and worship Him, which was through a blood animal sacrifice that portrayed the sacrificial death of the Lamb of God.

Cain adhered to a form of spirituality but denied its power.

2 Timothy 3:5, “holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.”

By killing the lamb and offering it to God, Abel acknowledged the following:

- (1) He acknowledged that God was righteous in driving fallen man out of the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:24).
- (2) He acknowledged that he was a guilty sinner and that death was his just due.
- (3) He acknowledged that God was holy and must punish sin.
- (4) He acknowledged that God was merciful and willing to accept the death of an innocent substitute in his place.
- (5) He acknowledged that he looked for acceptance with God in Christ, the Lamb.

In order for Abel to have operated in faith and Cain to have not, both men had to have heard the Lord’s commands to bring a blood animal sacrifice since faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of Christ according to Romans 10:17.

Romans 10:17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”

Genesis 4:5

“but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.”

Cain is bitter and angry that he could not worship the Lord according to his own rules and this was reflected in his face.

Proverbs 27:19, “As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects man.”

Genesis 4:6

“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?’”

Genesis 4:7

“If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is

crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.”

“**Sin**” is the noun *chatta’th* (jaF*j^), which is pronounced khat-tawth' and refers to the indwelling old Adamic sin nature that every person born into the world receives through imputation and is through the function of human volition, the source of all personal sins, mental, verbal and overt.

Romans 5:19, “For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

By failing to present the proper offering to the Lord, Cain was rejecting the promised “Seed” Jesus Christ as His Savior whose death for sin is portrayed in the blood animal sacrifice. Therefore, God accepted Abel’s offering since it was a blood sacrifice whereas Cain’s offering, was not accepted since it was bloodless.

Hebrews 9:22b, “All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Also, God did not accept Cain’s offering since it consisted of the fruit of his own work and the product of his own labors, or in other words, the work of his own hands, which expressed his self-righteous arrogance.

Cain was involved in relative human righteousness.

Isaiah 64:6, “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; and all of us wither like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.”

God only accepts the righteousness that is received through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:5, “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

Genesis 4:8

“Cain told (verb *`amar* (rm^a*) “to have a conversation”) **Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain**

rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”

Genesis 4:9

“Then the LORD said to Cain, ‘Where is Abel your brother?’ And he said, ‘I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?’”

The Lord knew that Cain murdered his brother Abel since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history.

The Lord asked Cain where his brother Abel was because He wanted Cain to confess his guilt and to make Cain aware of his need for forgiveness and a Savior and yet, Cain refused to accept responsibility for his crime. Cain concealed all traces of his crime by burying the body of his brother Abel in the ground.

The fact that Cain lied to God and claimed that he did not know of the whereabouts of his brother Abel indicated that he was under the deception of Satan who is a liar and a murderer (Jn. 8:44). It is interesting and ironic that here we see Cain unwilling to offer an animal blood sacrifice to God as was required by God, yet he has no problem shedding his brother's blood.

Murder is one of the sins that God hates according to Proverbs 6:16-19 and according to Genesis 9:6 is to be punished through capital punishment.

Cain killed Abel in a jealous rage, which reveals the fact that he was an emotional person who was governed by his emotions.

Proverbs 6:34, “For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.”

Cain was not only the first murderer in human history but also the first religious persecutor.

2 Timothy 3:12, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

Abel is a striking type of Christ and his murder by Cain foreshadowed our Lord's rejection and crucifixion by the Jews. Like Christ, Abel was hated without a cause by his brother (Jn. 15:25) and like Christ, Abel was murdered because of envy (Mt. 27:18).

Genesis 4:10

“He said, ‘What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.’”

The phrase **“The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground”** indicates that every drop of Abel's blood that was shed by Cain was a testimony as to the guilt of Cain.

Genesis 4:11

“Now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.”

Genesis 4:12

“When you cultivate the ground, it will no longer yield its strength to you; you will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth.”

God can no longer speak to Cain in mercy but rather in judgment since he will not accept responsibility for his crime and confess it and recognize his need for forgiveness of his sin and a Savior.

Genesis 4:13

“Cain said to the LORD, ‘My punishment is too great to bear!’”

Genesis 4:14

“Behold, You have driven me this day from the face of the ground; and from Your face I will be hidden, and I will be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

Cain is more concerned about his punishment than the terrible sin he has committed and is a manifestation of a great hardness of heart or insensitivity towards sin.

The phrase **“whoever finds me will kill me”** indicates that Adam and Eve had other children and not just Cain and Abel.

Adam and Eve had other sons and daughters, which would be in accord with Genesis 1:28, 3:16 and 5:4.

Genesis 4:15

“So the LORD said to him, ‘Therefore whoever kills Cain, vengeance will be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the LORD appointed a sign for Cain, so that no one finding him would slay him.”

God deals graciously with Cain by setting a sign to protect Cain from those who would seek to avenge the death of Abel.

The Bible does not state the nature of this sign but only that it would protect Cain. To be avenged sevenfold means that anyone who kills Cain in vengeance would be fully and completely avenged.

Genesis 4:16

“Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”

“Nod” means, “wandering” and this land was given that name because Cain wandered there.

Like Cain, those who did not exercise faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior and live in sin and hate are simply restless wanderers who are not living in the presence of God but instead are walking in the spiritual darkness of sin and hate that constitutes Satan’s cosmic system.

1 John 2:11, “But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

In Genesis 4:17-24, we see the establishment and development of the first human civilization inspired by Satan that lives independently of God, thus, in Genesis 4:17-24, we have the record of origins of the cosmic system of Satan.

The cosmic system of Satan is a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults and the occult dominated and negatively affected by Satan who is god of this satanic cosmos.

Believers are prohibited from loving the world or the temptations of the world in the sense of honoring them.

1 John 2:15-17

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

This system is promoted by Satan, conformed to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to God the cause of Christ.

Genesis 4:17

“Cain had relations with his wife and she conceived, and gave birth to Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city Enoch, after the name of his son.”

Since God created only one man and one woman, it was essential for brothers to marry sisters in order to continue the human race.

The critics of the Bible quibble over the fact that Cain had a wife had to be his sister and would have been genetic problems as there is today if a sister and brother procreated. But we must understand that in the first generations, all marriages were brother and sister marriages and that there were no mutant genes in the genetic systems of any of these children so that no genetic harm could have resulted from close marriages.

Many, many generations later, during the time of Moses, such mutations had accumulated to the point where such unions were genetically dangerous so that incest was thenceforth prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:9).

Genesis 4:17-24 contains the genealogy of Cain and the accomplishments of his descendants and his lineage is symbolic of human culture with great civilizations living independently of God and not recognizing His sovereignty over human affairs as a result of being deceived by Satan.

“**Enoch**” is the proper noun *chanokh* (Ew{nj&}) pronounced khan-oke, which means, “dedicated one, dedication, commencement.”

The Enoch of Genesis 4:17 was an unbeliever and did not worship the Lord and he must not be confused with the Enoch of Genesis 5:18-24 who was a prophet and walked with God and was the son of Jared and father of Methuselah.

Cain built the first city and named it after his son Enoch, thus, signifying that Cain was “establishing” a different life that was altogether different from the one he had known with his parents back in Eden and by establishing this new city, Cain was living defiance of the Lord’s prophecy that he would be a wanderer.

Now, as you recall in Genesis 4:11-12, Cain was cursed by God and was to be a fugitive on the earth for his murder of Abel. Cain did “not” beat the curse that God had placed on him that he would never settle in one place by building this city since the participle form of the verb *banah* is expressing progressive action and indicating that he did not complete the city and if he had, the perfect tense of the verb *banah* would have been employed.

The city refers to some form of fortification, which he built in unbelief since God promised him that He would protect him from those who might seek revenge.

Notice that Cain honors his son by naming it after him rather than giving the city a name that honors God.

Genesis 4:18

“**Now to Enoch was born Irad** (pronounce ee-rawd and means “the townsman”), **and Irad became the father of Mehujael** (pronounced ekh-oo-yaw-ale and means “smitten by God”), **and Mehujael became the father of Methushael** (pronounced meth-oo-shaw-ale’ and means “man of God”), **and Methushael became the father of Lamech** (pronounced leh-mek and means “powerful, conqueror”).”

The name Lamech indicates that he was a tyrant and led the Cainites in open rebellion against God, which was first manifested in Lamech taking two wives.

Genesis 4:19

“**Lamech took to himself two wives: the name of the one was Adah** (pronounced aw-daw and means “ornament”), **and the name of the other, Zillah** (pronounced tsil-law and means “shade or shelter”).”

Lamech is the first polygamist meaning he was the first man to take more than one wife and notice that one of the first attacks of Satan against God is against the divine institution of marriage (Gen. 2:24; Mt. 19:5-6).

The names of Lamech’s wives emphasize their physical attractiveness and Lamech’s physical lust for these women.

Genesis 4:20

“**Adah gave birth to Jabal** (pronounced yaw-bawl and means “wanderer”); **he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock.**”

Jabal invented the tent thus enabling him to carry his home with and develop a nomadic lifestyle. He also developed formal systems for domesticating and commercially producing other animals besides Abel’s sheep.

Genesis 4:21

“**His brother's name was Jubal** (pronounced yoo-bawl and means “sweet sounds”); **he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.**”

Jubal had an ear for music and was the first musical genius since he invented stringed and wind musical instruments, which would be used to mitigate the sorrow of living a life apart from God. Music is not evil in of itself but is in fact, is an expression of worship if it honors the Lord.

Psalm 150:3-5

“Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre.”

“Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe.”

“Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals.”

Genesis 4:22

“**As for Zillah, she also gave birth to Tubal-cain** (pronounced too-bal kah-yin and means “the

splinter of iron resulting from pounding iron”), **the forger of all implements of bronze and iron; and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah** (pronounced nah-am-aw and means “pleasant”).”

Tubal-cain was the inventor of all kinds of objects of bronze and iron, which he undoubtedly, used this talent to produce weapons, thus he was the first arms dealer. The production of metallic weapons was invented, giving those who possessed them and were skilled in them in their use advantage over other men.

Lamech and his family attempted to make life on planet earth as pleasant as possible with their various inventions but none these things could produce true happiness and security in any of them since true happiness and security originates with the Lord and having a relationship and fellowship with Him by obedience to His Word.

Psalms 16:11, “You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.”

The accomplishments of Lamech and his three sons were in vain since they were independent of God.

Ecclesiastes 1:14, “I have seen all the works which have been done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and striving after wind.”

Genesis 4:23

“Lamech said to his wives, ‘Adah and Zillah, listen to my voice, You wives of Lamech, give heed to my speech, for I have killed a man for wounding me; And a boy for striking me.’”

Genesis 4:24

“If Cain is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold.”

In Genesis 4:23-24, we have the first human poetry recorded for us where Lamech boasts of his deeds, which is a characteristic of godless human poetry and writing, asserting man’s self-sufficiency and independence from God.

Cain’s boastful poem is a blasphemous outburst against God where he is in effect saying in Genesis 4:24 that “if God promises a sevenfold vengeance on anyone killing Cain, I myself

guarantee a seventy-sevenfold retribution on anyone who even touches me.”

Romans 12:19, “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”

Lamech is defiantly proclaiming that he has his son’s weapons and that he can take care of himself and does not need God to protect him.

The phrase “seventy-sevenfold” represents unlimited violence, thus another aspect of this first human civilization that is under the influence of Satan and the power of the old sin nature is that of being marked by violence and so it is today in our world that we live in.

As we noted Genesis 4:17-24 deals with the line of Cain and the origins of the cosmic system of Satan. Then, in Genesis 4:24-25, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit goes back to the beginning.

The reason for this is to show that in spite of the ungodly direction Cain and his descendants took, there was still hope. The line of Cain through tyrannical Lamech is presented to show the origins of Satan’s cosmic system and the consequences of such a society.

Now in Genesis 4:25, the story goes back to the birth of Seth to reveal the progress of the line that would produce the “Seed” the Lord Jesus Christ who was promised to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:15.

Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Cain and his descendants were unbelievers who founded and developed a society that was totally independent of God and inspired by the devil whereas Seth and his descendants were believers.

Genesis 4:25 reveals that Adam and Eve had another son after the death of Abel, who they named Seth who in turn had a son named Enosh and then in Genesis 4:26, the Scriptures state that after this men began to call upon the name of the Lord, which is a reference to prayer.

Genesis 4:25-26 stands in marked contrast with Genesis 4:17-24 since the latter emphasizes human accomplishments and human boasting in the line of Cain whereas the former we have the humility of the line of Seth calling upon the Person of the Lord in prayer.

Genesis 4:25

“Adam had relations with his wife again; and she gave birth to a son, and named him Seth, for, she said, ‘God has appointed me another offspring in place of Abel, for Cain killed him.’”

“Seth” is the proper noun *sheth* (jv@), which is pronounced shayth and means, “appointed one, one given for a set purpose.”

Eve gives this child this particular name wishing that this child would replace or be a substitute for Abel who was murdered by Cain. Therefore, we could interpret Seth’s name to mean, “substitute.”

By giving this child the name Seth, Eve was demonstrating her faith in the Lord delivering on His promise of a “Seed” a Child who would deliver her and her husband and children from the sin nature and Satan. The fact that the name “Seth” means, “substituted” expresses Eve’s faith that it was through this son that God’s promises would eventually be fulfilled.

According to Luke 3:38, Seth and Enosh and Adam began the line of Christ through Mary.

Luke 3:38, “the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.”

Notice, how the Lord comforts Adam and Eve who have been devastated by the loss their first two children, Cain and Abel.

Abel, of course, was murdered by Cain who was in turn banished from the presence of the Lord!

2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.”

“who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”

In contrast to the earlier naming of Cain, Eve now credits God alone for giving her a child. In Genesis 4:1, Eve names her first child “Cain” and states that she had **“gotten a manchild with the help of the Lord,”** whereas here in Genesis 4:25, she simply states that God and God alone gave her Seth.

Genesis 4:1, “Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain (Hebrew noun *qayin* (/y!q^), which is pronounced kah-yin and means, “one gotten, obtained, acquired”), and she said, ‘I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD.’”

Genesis 4:26

“To Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then men began to call upon the name of the LORD.”

“Enosh” is the proper noun *enosh* (vw{na\$), which is pronounced en-ohsh and means, “weakness” and in his weakness he turns to God in prayer.

The name “Enosh” symbolizes the consciousness of human impotence and weakness, which in turn makes man aware of his total dependence upon God and such awareness, drives men to pray to God. The name that Seth chose for his son expresses his awareness and frailty of human life and his need for redemption and the promised Redeemer who is the Lord Jesus Christ. The godly line of Seth manifests its faith through prayer to God.

“Then” is the temporal adverb *az* (za*), which is pronounced awz and with the perfective verb *chalah* (ll^j*), which is pronounced khaw-lal, “to begin” marks the next event that took place after the birth of Enosh.

“To call” is the verb *qara* (ar*q+), which is pronounced kaw-raw and is a reference to prayer and is in the “hophal” stem indicating that something “caused” men to begin to pray to God or we could say that they were driven to pray to God.

The first reason why men were driven to begin praying to God was that they recognized that they were weak and impotent as a result of possessing an old sin nature, which they received at physical

birth and is symbolized by the name “**Enosh**” (Rm. 5:12-19).

The second reason why men were driven to begin praying to God was because of the presence of ungodly men like Lamech and his sons who did not respect God and were violent. Therefore, this reference to prayer is a prayer of deliverance from not only from the enemy within, the old sin nature, but also from enemies without, ungodly men that are slaves to the cosmic system of Satan.

Psalm 50:15, “Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.”

“**Name**” is the noun *shem* (SV@), which is pronounced shame and refers to the authority, majesty, power, excellent character and nature of the Person of the Lord.

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is pronounced ye-ho-vaw and is the personal name of God emphasizing that He is the redeemer of mankind and is used in His relationship to His covenants or contracts with men whereas *Elohim* emphasizes the transcendent character of God.

The term “**Lord**” is applied to the Father (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; 20:42) and to the Son (Rm. 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:31) and the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17).

In Genesis 4:26, the Father is in view since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Prayer must be made in the name or Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Genesis 4:26 records for us that men first began to pray to the Father after the birth of Enosh.

Prayer is an opportunity to engage the Father in conversation, which means talking to Him and listening to Him. Prayer is one of the means that God has given the believer in order that he might

enjoy and experience fellowship and intimacy with Him.

Prayer is an expression of the believer’s worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

The believer has been given the privilege of approaching the Father in prayer based solely upon the merits of the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ on the Cross.

Every church age believer is commanded in Scripture to pray (Mt. 7:7; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17).

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “Make it your habit to pray.”

There are five essential elements to prayer:

1. Confession
2. Thanksgiving
3. Worship
4. Intercession
5. Petition.

Confession:

1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Thanksgiving:

Colossians 4:2, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”

Worship:

Psalm 18:3, “I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”

Intercession:

Ephesians 6:18, “By means of every kind of specific detailed reverential prayer requests, all of you make it your habit to pray at each and every opportunity while in fellowship with the Spirit. Now, for this very purpose, all of

you make it your habit to stay alert (in prayer) with every kind of persistent specific detailed requests with regards to each and every one of the saints.”

Petition:

Philippians 4:6, “At this very moment, all of you stop continuing to be anxious about absolutely anything, but rather, concerning anything at all by means of reverential prayer in the presence of the Father and by means of petition accompanied by the giving of thanks, let your specific detailed requests be repeatedly made known in the presence of the Father.”

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14-15, “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know without a doubt that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know without a doubt that we have the requests, which we have asked from Him.”

Answered prayer demands faith on the part of the believer (Mt. 17:20; Ja. 5:15).

James 1:5, 6

“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

“But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”

Answered prayer demands perseverance on the part of the believer.

Matthew 7:7, “Ask repeatedly, and it will be given to you; seek repeatedly, and you will find; knock continuously, and it will be opened to you.”

The Scriptures do not command a set time for prayer or length, but rather the believer is to pray day and night, nor does the Scripture command that a certain posture accompany prayer since it is

the attitude of the heart, which is important to God, thus it can be accomplished sitting, standing or kneeling down.

The believer is to not only pray as an individual but also a part of a corporate unit in the local assembly as an expression of unity (Acts 12:12; 16:25; 20:36).

Prayer is to be an expression of love for God and others (Mt. 5:21-24; 43-48).

Prayer solves problems (Kgs. 17:1; cf. 18:36-46; Acts 12:1-17; Phlp. 4:6).

Genesis 5

Genesis 5 contains the genealogy of Adam as well as the story of Enoch. Genesis 5 begins the third major section of the book of Genesis and concludes in Genesis 6:8 and deals with the genealogy of Adam and in particular the line of Seth, which is the line of the “Promised Seed” (Gen. 3:15) who is Jesus Christ.

Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

The first major section was the prologue contained in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and the second major section was contained in Genesis 2:4-4:26.

Each of these sections is marked by the noun *toledhoth* (pronounced: toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T}), “generations” and is always used in a transitional sense meaning it is never used as a conclusion to what precedes but rather it is used as an introduction to what follows.

Genesis 5:1

“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made (*asah* “modeled”) him in the likeness of God.”

“This is the book of the generations of Adam” does “not” refer to the preceding events but rather to the genealogy that follows and this is indicated by the noun *toledhoth*, “generations.” This genealogy of Adam is “vertical” because it shows descendancy from Adam through Seth to Noah and contains ten individuals.

Please be aware of the fact that Biblical genealogies do “not” name every person in the line but only those who were prominent figures in the eyes of God.

The purpose of the genealogy recorded in Genesis is “not” chronological but rather to trace the thread of the promised Redeemer, the Seed, Jesus Christ.

The Cainite genealogy in Genesis 4 contains seven generations (from Cain to Jubal) whereas the Sethite genealogy in Genesis 5 has ten (from Adam to Noah). Both lists end with three sons coming from the final name on the list (Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain (4:20-22); Shem, Ham and Japheth (5:32). In each list only one man spoke—Lamech in the Cainite list (4:23-24) and a different Lamech in the Sethite list (5:29). The Cainite Lamech was taunting the curse (4:24), whereas the Sethite Lamech was moaning under the curse and looking for comfort from his son Noah (5:29).

The genealogy of Adam in Genesis 5 is also “linear” since it establishes continuity over stretches of time without narrative and is used to demonstrate that Noah is the legitimate descendant of Adam through Seth and that his ancestry was in the line of the Promised Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ who would defeat sin and Satan.

The names in this genealogy of Adam or record of his descendants are those sons who turned out to be in the line of the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ. The human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth and not the line of Cain.

Also, the phrase “**the book**” is first mentioned in the Old Testament whereas “the book” is first mentioned in Matthew 1:1, “**the book of the generation of Jesus Christ.**” Thus, the “first” book in the Old Testament tells us of the first Adam whereas the “second” book speaks of the origins of the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:47).

Three facts are emphasized in the record of the ten antediluvian patriarchs in Genesis 5: (1) God was preserving and recording the divinely ordained line of the Promised Seed, with the appropriate genealogical and chronological data. (2) God’s command to Adam to be fruitful and multiply was being obeyed since the record states that each one in the line had sons and daughters. (3) God’s curse

was also in effect, since man died even though living hundreds of years.

Genesis 5:2

“He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created.”

Genesis 5:1-2 refer back to Genesis 1:26-28.

Genesis 5:3

“When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth (name means “substitute”).”

“He (Adam) became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image” means that Adam passed down his sin nature to his son Seth through copulation with Eve.

According to Romans 5:12-19 and John 8:31-36 everyone person born into the world receives the imputation of Adam’s original sin in the garden, thus making them physically alive but spiritually and qualified for grace, which is for the unworthy and undeserving.

“Seth” is the proper noun *sheth* (jv@), which is pronounced shayth and means, “appointed one, one given for a set purpose” and expresses Eve desire that he would replace Abel.

Genesis 5:4-21

“Then the days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years, and he died.”

“Seth lived one hundred and five years, and became the father of Enosh (“weakness”).”

“Then Seth lived eight hundred and seven years after he became the father of Enosh, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years, and he died.”

“Enosh lived ninety years, and became the father of Kenan (“smith”).”

“Then Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years after he became the father of Kenan, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years, and he died.”

“Kenan lived seventy years, and became the father of Mahalalel (“Praiseworthy is God”).”

“Then Kenan lived eight hundred and forty years after he became the father of Mahalalel, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days of Kenan were nine hundred and ten years, and he died.”

“Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Jared (“descent”: first one to not live nine hundred years).”

“Then Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Jared, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years, and he died.”

“Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and became the father of Enoch (“dedication, commencement”).”

“Then Jared lived eight hundred years after he became the father of Enoch, and he had other sons and daughters.”

“So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years, and he died.”

“Enoch lived sixty-five years, and became the father of Methuselah (“When he dies, then it [the Flood] shall be sent”).”

The fact that Enoch named his son Methuselah indicates that God gave Enoch a prophecy of the coming judgment of the great Flood. God had promised Enoch that the Flood would not come as long as Methuselah lived, which was 969 years, which is more than any man in history.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Genesis 5:22

“Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Enoch made God’s Hall of Fame of Faith in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:5, “By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; and he was not found because God took him up; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”

Enoch’s faith expressed itself by his obedience to the Word of God, which testified that he lived a life that was pleasing to God before being taken off planet earth.

“**Enoch**” is the proper noun *chanokh* (Ew{nj&} pronounced khan-oke, which means, “dedicated one, dedication, commencement.”

Enoch was a prophet of God and preached the gospel in times of great apostasy.

Jude 14, 15

“It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, ‘Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones.’”

“to execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have done in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Jude 14-15 is a prophecy of Christ’s 2nd Advent, which comes 7 years after the Rapture of the church.

Enoch was also in the line of Christ according to Luke 3:37 and was 7th in descent from Adam in the line of Seth (Jude 14; cf. 1 Ch. 1:3) and he lived halfway between Adam and the Flood.

The phrase “**walked with God**” refers to the fact that Enoch had intimate fellowship with God.

Genesis 5:23

“So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years.”

Genesis 5:24

“Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him.”

It does not say that he walked with God prior to the birth of Methuselah but rather after his birth. This child was used by God to change his life. Remember all children are a gift from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3-4, “Behold, children are a gift from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one’s youth.”

“**Took**” is the Qal perfect form of the verb *laqach*, “to forcibly snatch or steal away, forcibly remove.” God forcibly removed Enoch off planet earth and the Lord Jesus Christ will do this to the Rapture generation of the church.

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

“Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

Nearly 25 centuries later, another prophet, Elijah, was taken up into heaven without dying (2 Ki. 2:11). It is significant that Enoch prophesied about midway between Adam and Abraham, and Elijah about midway between Abraham and Christ, and that both Enoch and Elijah ministered in times of deep apostasy.

Genesis 5:25

“Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and became the father of Lamech (“powerful, conqueror”).”

Genesis 5:26

“Then Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years after he became the father of Lamech, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 5:27

“So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died.”

Genesis 5:28

“Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son.”

Genesis 5:29

“Now he called his name Noah (“rest”), saying, “This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.”

Genesis 5:30

“Then Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years after he became the father of Noah, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 5:31

“So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years, and he died.”

Genesis 5:32

“Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem (“name”), Ham (“dark”), and Japheth (“fair”).”

Genesis 6

Genesis 6:1-8 gives us the record of Satan and the fallen angels attempt to prevent the incarnation of the Son of God, by having sex with women.

The term “incarnation” is a technical theological term, which means that the Son of God became a human being and the result of this is called the “hypostatic union,” which means that Jesus Christ is undiminished deity and true humanity in one Person forever, or in other words, He is 100% deity and 100% humanity. By attempting to prevent God the Son becoming a human being, Satan and the fallen angels who in effect be preventing God from fulfilling His promise to Eve after the fall to give her a “Seed” who would destroy the works of the devil.

The society in the antediluvian period had deteriorated so much that now the fallen angels made a bold attempt to prevent the Son of God becoming a human being. But, God in grace and love and in judgment thwarted their attempt by destroying every human being on the earth that was not a believer in order to ensure that His promise to Adam and Eve would be fulfilled.

Genesis 6:1

“Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them.”

Genesis 6:2

“that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.”

The phrase **“the sons of God”** has often been interpreted as referring to the “Sethite” line, (believers) and the **“daughters of men”** as being the Cainite line (unbelievers), thus, they interpret this passage as being the breakdown of the separation between believers and unbelievers but this is not the case.

In the New Testament, the phrase **“the sons of God”** is a technical term for those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and as a result are members of the royal family of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 3:26-28) but the phrase in the Old Testament is always used of angels (Gen. 6:2, 4, Job

However, in the Old Testament, the phrase **“the sons of God”** (Hebrew: *b'neha'elohim*) is a technical term that is always used for the angels, both elect and non-elect (Gen. 6:2, 4; Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7).

Job 1:6, “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.”

Job 2:1, “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the LORD.”

Job 38:7, “When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”

Neither the descendants of Seth nor believers of any sort have been previously referred to in Genesis as sons of God in any kind of spiritual sense and except for Adam himself, they could not have been the sons of God in a physical sense.

Now, if the phrase **“the sons of God”** referred to human beings who were believers, we should expect it to be applied to Noah and his sons and

their wives, who were all believers who survived the flood and yet, it is not.

The **“sons of God”** are clearly distinct from the human race, which is called **“men.”** It is significant that the Septuagint (LXX) renders the phrase **“sons of God”** as **“angels of God.”**

Now, one of the objections that bible expositors have towards this interpretation that the sons of God of Genesis 6:2 and 4 are the fallen angels is the Lord Jesus Christ’s teaching concerning the angels in Matthew 22:30.

Matthew 22:30, “For in the resurrection they (human beings: male and female) neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.”

The Lord is teaching that when we receive our resurrection bodies, there will be no more marriages and sexual unions but that we will be like the angels, thus indicating that angels do not have sex. But the Lord did “not” say that the angels have never had the capacity to procreate with members of the human race and He simply taught His audience that this was clearly the case now and forever. We can infer that after the sexual invasion of Genesis 6 by the fallen angels, God removed the ability of all the demons to appear as human beings and procreate.

Demons can manifest themselves now through demon possession meaning they can enter an unbeliever’s body but cannot possess a believer since the body of a believer is indwelt by all three members of the Trinity (Father: Eph. 4:6; Son: Col. 1:27; Spirit: Rom. 8:11). Therefore, Genesis 6:2 teaches us that at one time during the antediluvian period the fallen angels did have the capacity to be made visible and have sex with human beings but afterwards God judged them for this sexual invasion and took away this capacity for the angels to have sex with women.

These fallen angels were not only having sex with women but they also were possessing the bodies of the offspring of this union, who Genesis 6:4 calls **“the Nephilim.”**

Because of the function of human volition, a demon cannot possess a human being unless a human being chooses to let that demon do so.

Genesis 6:2 says that the fallen angels “**chose**” (*bachar*) women to be their wives who were open to demon possession and the Hebrew word for “chose” contains the idea a careful choice arising out of particular need. Therefore, the fallen angels carefully chose those women who were unbelievers and were opened to demon possession to take part in this attempt to prevent God the Son from becoming a human being.

The fallen angels of Genesis 6 are mentioned in the New Testament.

Jude 5, 6

“Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

Jude 6 clearly teaches that God judged the fallen angels of Genesis 6:1-2 for abandoning their own domain.

1 Peter 3:18-20

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

“in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.”

“who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

The phrase “**the spirits now in prison**” refers to the fallen angels of Genesis 6:2 and 4 and this is clearly indicated by the fact that this rebellion is associated with the flood judgment in the days of Noah!

2 Peter 2:4, 5

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed

them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.”

“and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

“**Cast them into hell**” is the nominative masculine singular aorist active participle form of the verb *tartaroo* (*tartaroww*), which means, “to hold captive in Tartarus.”

Tartarus is one of the four compartments of Hades, which is located underneath the earth: (1) Paradise: the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to heaven after the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 4:10). (2) Torments: the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from all dispensations (Lk. 16:19-31). (3) Tartarus: the abode of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who had sex with woman in order to corrupt the human race and prevent the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 4; Jude 6). (4) The Abyss: the place of imprisonment for the demons who violated certain rules for angelic creation and will be released during the Tribulation (Lk. 8:30-31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 20:1-3).

Jude 5-6, 1 Peter 3:19-20 and 2 Peter 2:4-5 all make mention of fallen angels and their activities prior to the flood of Noah, thus clearly indicating that the sons of God in Genesis 6:2 and 4 are fallen angels who were imprisoned and will remain imprisoned in Tartarus until their sentence to the Lake of Fire is executed at the end of human history (Rev. 20:10).

Genesis 6:3

“Then the LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’”

Genesis 6:3 is a reference to God the Holy Spirit in common grace (grace given to every member of the human race) who convicts the unbeliever that he is a sinner and needs a Savior who is Jesus Christ (John 16:7-11).

The sentence “**his days shall be one hundred twenty years**” does “not” refer to the lifespan of

humanity but rather is a reference to a prophecy that was proclaimed one hundred twenty years before the Great Flood in the days of Noah, which was proclaimed by Methuselah and Noah.

The Holy Spirit through Methuselah and Noah proclaimed the Gospel of salvation to unbelieving human beings prior to the judgment of the Great Flood, thus teaching the principle that God's grace precedes His judgment.

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

Genesis 6:4

"The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. Those were the mighty men who were of old, men of renown."

The "Nephilim" were the offspring of the sexual union between "the sons of God" who were fallen angels and the "daughters of men" and were half-men and half-angel.

In the Hebrew the noun "Nephilim" means "fallen ones," which further indicates that these individuals were half-fallen humanity and half-fallen angels. The pantheons of Greek mythology have distorted the record of the Nephilim mentioned in Genesis 6:3 replete with accounts of gods descending to earth to cohabit with beautiful women. The half-human offspring of these unions were the demigods and heroes like the Greek Orpheus, Minos, Hercules and Perseus. It is interesting that the Lord taught in Matthew 24:37-39 that the days preceding His Second Advent will be like the days of Noah.

Matthew 24:37-39

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah."

"For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark."

"and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be."

The proliferation of unexplained occult phenomena (UFO's, UFO kidnappings, channeling) in our day and age is an attempt by Satan to gain direct control over the souls and bodies of human beings to prevent the Second Advent of Christ just as he attempted to prevent His First Advent?

It is also interesting that genetic manipulation is taking place in our day and age where geneticists believe they will one day be able to produce a race of carbon copies of Einstein or Michael Jordan. No doubt the fallen angels have much greater knowledge of genetics than humans and could easily produce these great giants who would be half-men and half-angel and under their control.

Genesis 6:5

"Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

Satan and the fallen angels first captured the thinking processes of the antediluvian's, which is indicated by the phrase "every intent of the thoughts of his (man's) heart was only evil continually" and then, they were able to dominate their conduct, which is indicated by the phrase "the wickedness of man was great on the earth."

Genesis 6:6

"The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart."

Genesis 6:6 is an "anthropopathism" meaning that the human emotions of feeling sorry and grieving are ascribed to the Lord even though He doesn't possess these emotions and this is done by the writer in order to convey the Lord's attitude towards the antediluvians in terms that the reader can understand.

Genesis 6:7

"The LORD said, 'I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds

of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.”

Genesis 6:7 is a prophecy of the coming flood that would take place in the days of Noah, which would destroy Satan’s attempt to prevent the incarnation of the Son of God, the promised “Seed.”

Genesis 6:8

“But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.”

Genesis 6:8 teaches that Noah was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who would be the one that the Messianic line would run through and produce the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

Genesis 6:9-12 records for us the contrast between the spiritual character of Noah and the character of his contemporaries who were unbelievers. Just as Noah’s lifestyle was contrary to his unbelieving contemporaries so our lifestyle as church age believers should be contrary to that of our unbelieving contemporaries.

Ephesians 5:8, “for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.”

Noah’s name literally means “rest, quiet” and he was the son of the second Lamech, the grandson of Methuselah and is mentioned 10th in the descent from Adam. Noah was a prophet according to 2 Peter 2:5 who was used by God to warn an unregenerate and degenerate world for 120 years of the impending judgment on the earth. He lived in an evil world that mocked God and during a time where fallen angels were having sex with women and producing a race of half-man and half-angel.

Genesis 6:9

“These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.”

“These are the records of the generations of Noah” is a “broad” genealogy presenting only the first generation of Noah’s descendants and the major event of their lives, namely, the Great Flood.

Noah is a pivotal figure in Genesis 1-11 since he comes midway in the genealogies between Adam and Abraham.

The account of Noah and his family, which comes in the middle of the books between the creation of Adam and the call of Abraham, records a pivotal event in that history, namely, the Great Flood.

The narrator, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit devotes a full book to the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life. He is the last antediluvian patriarch mentioned in the list of the heroes of faith found in Hebrews 11.

Hebrews 11:7, “By means of faith, Noah, after having received a divine warning concerning the things which at the time were not yet seen, and having responded reverentially built an ark for the deliverance of his household through which (faith) he rendered the wickedness of the world more evident and censurable and as a result he became a possessor of divine righteousness because of his faith.”

“Noah was a righteous man,” means that Noah trusted in Jesus Christ as His Savior and as a result God imputed His righteousness to Noah and it also means that Noah lived in that righteousness by being obedient to God’s Word and thus fulfilling his obligations to both love God and his fellow human being.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer’s righteousness.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

The righteousness of God is received through faith in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ since in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God, Jesus Christ is revealed (Rom. 1:16-17).

Romans 1:17, “For in it (the Gospel) the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

The righteousness of God is imputed or in other words, credited as a gift to the spiritual bank

account of the person who exercises faith alone in Christ alone.

Romans 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”

After salvation, the believer is commanded to present the members of his physical body as instruments of righteousness, which refers to the practice of righteousness.

Romans 6:17, 18

“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed.”

“and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”

The Word of God trains the believer to live in the righteousness of Christ since it is the mind and thinking of Christ.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

“**Blameless**” does “not” mean that Noah was sinless, only the Lord Jesus was, but rather it means that Noah was “virtuous” and had “integrity of character” as a result of fulfilling his obligations to love both God and men.

Romans 13:10, “Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

“**Noah walked with God**” means that Noah had intimate fellowship with God, which is accomplished by being obedient to the Word of God and loving both God and man.

Noah loved God and his neighbor, which stood in stark contrast to all of his contemporaries who lived according to the code of conduct of Satan’s cosmic system, which is sin and hate.

1 John 2:7-11

“Beloved, I am not writing a new (in the sense of unfamiliar) commandment to you, but an

old (old in the sense of familiar)

commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.”

“On the other hand, I am writing a new (in example [Christ] and experience [believers]) commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.”

“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”

“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”

“But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Genesis 6:10

“**Noah became the father of three sons: Shem (“name”), Ham (“dark”), and Japheth (“fair”).**”

Genesis 6:11

“**Now the earth (earth’s inhabitants) was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.**”

Genesis 6:11 contains the figure of speech called “metonymy of the subject” where the earth is put for its inhabitants; therefore, we could translate “**the earth**” as “the earth’s inhabitants.”

“**Corrupt**” is the verb *shachath* (tj^vv*) (shaw-khath), which appears four times in Genesis 6:11-13 and means, “to destroyed.”

In Genesis 6:11, the verb *shachath* in the qal stem emphasizes that the earth’s inhabitants were in a state of being destroyed in the sense of being totally and completely degenerate in the judgment of God because of the sexual invasion of the fallen angels.

“**Violence**” is the noun *chamas* (sm*j*) (khaw-mawce), which is a very broad term for wickedness in a general sense, which took the form of murder, occultism, sexual immorality and stealing.

Genesis 6:12

“God looked on the earth (earth’s inhabitants), and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

“**It was corrupt**” is the niphil form of the verb *shachath* indicating that the earth’s inhabitants were in a state of suffering the effects of this union between women and the fallen angels; thus, the purity of the human race was destroyed by this angelic invasion.

“**Had corrupted**” is the hiphil form of the verb *shachath* indicating that the entire human race was responsible for their actions by permitting this angelic invasion to take place amongst themselves.

Genesis 6:13-22 records Noah’s obedience to the Lord’s command to build an Ark in order to deliver him and his family from the coming flood that the Lord would use to destroy the wicked inhabitants of planet earth.

Genesis 6:13

“Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

The fact that God said that He would destroy all the inhabitants of the earth because of their wickedness, clearly indicates that the Flood in the days of Noah was “universal” and not “local” as the critics of the Bible contend.

Notice, that God takes Noah into his confidence demonstrating that Noah is experiencing fellowship with God and is on intimate terms with God and therefore, a friend of God. The fact that Noah was on intimate terms and experiencing fellowship with God is expressed in Genesis 6:9 with the phrase “**Noah walked with God**” and other parts of the Word of God.

Ezekiel 14:13, 14

“Son of man, if a country sins against Me by committing unfaithfulness, and I stretch out My hand against it, destroy its supply of bread, send famine against it and cut off from it both man and beast.”

“even though these three men, Noah, Daniel and Job were in its midst, by their own righteousness they could only deliver themselves,” declares the Lord GOD.”

Noah was a friend of God and on intimate terms with God because He was obedient to God and the Lord Jesus Christ taught this principle to His disciples.

John 15:14, “You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

Friends don’t hold things back from one another and they share secrets and joy with one another and are intimate with one another.

Friendship with the Lord is no different since He shares His secrets and joy and is intimate with the believer who obeys Him and so it was between Noah and God because Noah was obedient to him, God spoke with him concerning the Flood and did not speak to anyone else on the earth about including Noah’s family.

Abraham and Moses were also called “**friends of God**” because they were on intimate terms with the Lord and they were on intimate terms with the Lord because they were obedient to Him (Ex. 33:11; 2 Chron. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jam. 2:23)

Now, in order to preserve both human and terrestrial animal life on the earth, God instructed Noah to build a huge bargelike structure, in which the occupants would be saved from destruction in the coming Flood.

Genesis 6:14

“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

“**Ark**” is the noun *tevah* (hb*Ṭ@), which means, “a chest-shaped vessel.” The dimensions of the ark indicated it was a barge like vessel since it was designed for capacity and floating stability rather than for speed or navigability. The Word of God does not mention a rudder or navigational aids indicating that the fate of the ark depended solely upon the will of God.

Genesis 6:15

“This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits (cubit: 17.5 inches

long; 300 cubits=437.5 feet long), **its breadth fifty cubits** (72.92 feet wide), **and its height thirty cubits** (43.75 feet high).”

“**Cubit**” is the noun *ammah* (חמ"א) (am-maw), which is a term that is basically used to describe linear measurement at least from the time of Noah and is used throughout Scripture into the postexilic period.

In the nation of Israel, the measurement of a cubit is estimated to be approximately 17 ½ inches or the average distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. This is somewhat confirmed by information in the Siloam Inscription stating that the tunnel (which measures 1749 feet) was 1200 cubits long. This would make the cubit then used (in Hezekiah’s day) approximately 17 ½ inches.

Furthermore, since we know that Moses wrote the book of Genesis to the nation of Israel, the cubit mentioned in Genesis 6:15 would have been the one Israel used at the time Moses received the book of Genesis from the Lord. Therefore, if this confirmation is correct in the Siloam Inscription, coupled with the fact that Moses was writing to Israel and would be referring to the cubit that Israel used when he wrote Genesis 6:15, then we can infer that the cubit that Noah used was 17 ½ inches long.

Further substantiating that the cubit mentioned in Genesis 6:15 was 17 ½ inches long is that Moses does not attempt to define its length as he does in Deuteronomy 3:11 with the phrase the “**cubit of a man.**” Therefore, if the Hebrew cubit was 17 ½ inches long, then according to Genesis 6:15, the Ark was 437.5 feet long, 72.92 feet wide and 43.75 feet high.

Genesis 6:16

“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

Now, since the Ark had three decks, it had a total deck area of approximately 95,700 square feet (equivalent to slightly more than the area of twenty standard college basketball courts), and its total volume was 1,396,000 cubic feet, which is equal to 522 standard livestock cars used on

modern American railroads. This would make the length of the ark over 5 miles long!

Since it is known that about 240 sheep can be transported in one stock car, a total of over 125,000 sheep could have been carried on the Ark. The gross tonnage of the Ark (which is a measurement of cubic space rather than weight, one ton in this case being equivalent to 100 cubic feet of usable storage space) was about 13,960 tons, which would place it well within the category of large metal ocean-going vessels today.

The ark is a type of Christ, the Sustainer and Deliverer and Redeemer of His people from judgment (Heb. 11:7).

“**Window**” is the noun *tsohar* (תֹּסָר) (tso-har), which literally means, “an opening for daylight” and consisted of a one-cubit (17.5 inches) opening extending all around the Ark’s circumference, near the roof, as a provision for light and ventilation.

The Ark was to have only “one” door, which means that all must enter and leave by the same door and God wanted it this way since the door is a type of Christ.

John 10:9, “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

The door in the Ark teaches that there is only one way to get saved, through faith alone in Christ alone!

John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

We must remember that to Noah’s contemporaries the construction of this Ark seemed absolutely ridiculous since they had never seen any rain or any kind of flood before (Gen. 2:5), thus, Noah’s preaching about the coming flood, which is mentioned in 2 Peter 2:5, must have certainly been ridiculed.

Now, in Genesis 6:17, God tells Noah “why” he needs to build this great ship.

Genesis 6:17

“Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in

which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

Every living creature would be killed in the flood with the exception of course of those, which were brought into the Ark to repopulate the earth after the floodwaters receded. Not only would every living creature and human being be destroyed in the Flood but also everything that is on the earth itself including of course, vegetation!

Genesis 6:18

“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall enter the ark -- you and your sons and your wife, and your sons' wives with you.”

God is making a promise to Noah and his sons and his wife and to his son's wives that He will not kill them in the Flood, as He will do to everything living creature and man on the earth.

“**Covenant**” is the noun *b^erith* (tyr!B+), which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf. This covenant that God made with Noah denoted God's gracious undertaking for the benefit of Noah and his family and descendants as a result of Noah operating in faith and obeying God's command to build the Ark even though he had never seen rain in his life!

Notice that God not only makes this covenant with Noah and his wife but with his sons and their wives thus preserving the basic family unit.

There are two types of covenants: (1) Conditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of the recipient for its fulfillment (2) Unconditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of God for its fulfillment.

The covenant that God made with Noah was “unconditional” meaning it totally and completely depended upon the faithfulness of God.

Genesis 6:19

“And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.”

Genesis 6:20

“Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing

of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.”

Authorities on biological taxonomy estimate that there are less than 18,000 species of mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians living in the world, and which number can be doubled to allow for extinct land animals. Therefore, allowing then for two of each species, there might have to be a total of about 72,000 animals on the Ark or even maybe 75,000 to allow for five extra animals in each “clean” species.

Now, most land animals are small and the average size of one is less than the size of a sheep, it then becomes obvious that no more than 60 percent of the Ark's capacity would have to be used for animals. Actually, it would have been less than this, since the Biblical “kind” is much broader than that of the arbitrary “species” category of modern biology.

The phrase “**will come to you**” indicates that Noah did not have to go on hunting and trapping expedition to get all these animals, but rather the Lord in His omnipotence urged or impelled them toward the Ark, instinctively sensing the approaching disaster. Thus, the specified size of the Ark was totally and completely appropriate for the animals it had to carry.

Furthermore, there was ample room for the approximately one million species of insects as well as food for the animals, living quarters for Noah and his family and for any other purposes.

There would also be no problem assembling all these animals since they possessed genes given to them by the Lord to sense the approaching danger and migrate to the Ark. To this day, scientists cannot explain the migratory patterns and directional instincts of animals, especially birds, which enable them to adjust to sharp latitudinal and seasonal temperature and other changes that characterize the post-Flood world. These abilities have been inherited from their ancestors on the Ark.

Also, another biological mechanism possessed by animals as a protection against sharp temperature and other climatological changes is the ability to suspend all bodily changes in a state of hibernation. This ability enables an animal to pass

the winter in very confined quarters, with little or no food intake or bodily excretions.

As all these animals arrived at the Ark, ate a good meal, and then entered the Ark, in response to the suddenly darkened sky and the chill in the air, they settled down for a year-long “sleep” in their respective “nests” in the Ark.

Genesis 6:21

“As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”

Genesis 6:19-21 records the divine instructions for the preservation of land animals and bird life where two of every living creature was to be brought into the Ark and according to Genesis 7:2, seven “clean” animals were to be taken on board as sacrificial animals.

Genesis 6:22

“Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.”

Noah demonstrated his faith in the Lord by his obedience to the Lord’s command to build the ark.

Hebrews 11:7, “By means of faith, Noah, after having received a divine warning concerning the things which at the time were not yet seen, and having responding reverentially built an ark for the deliverance of his household through which (faith) he rendered the wickedness of the world more evident and censurable and as a result he became a possessor of divine righteousness because of his faith.”

Noah is a Type of Christ

Noah is a type of Christ. Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between 2 historical entities; the former is indirect and implicit, the latter direct and explicit. A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Noah and the events of his life parallel the Lord Jesus Christ and the events of His life. An example of a type is found in Romans 5.

Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

The Lord Jesus Christ employed typology in His teaching about Himself. In John 6, the Lord compared His humanity to the manna that was given to Israel. The manna typified the human nature of Christ, which provide for spiritual nourishment.

The fact that Noah is a type of Christ does “not” mean that He is equal to Him but rather he and his life foreshadow Christ and the events of his life. Noah and his work on the Ark parallel the Lord Jesus Christ, His work of salvation and His Second Advent.

The Flood itself is a type of the Tribulation period and Second Advent of Christ. The Flood, which came unexpectedly upon the antediluvian world, typifies the Second Advent of Christ, which will come unexpectedly the world.

Matthew 24:37-39

“For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah.”

“For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark.”

“and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so will the coming of the Son of Man be.”

Now, in regards to the typology concerning Noah, we must first examine the meaning of his name, which means, “rest,” which foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who would give us rest from the curse.

Genesis 5:28, 29

“Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and became the father of a son.”

"Now he called his name Noah ("rest"), saying, 'This one will give us rest from our work and from the toil of our hands arising from the ground which the LORD has cursed.'"

Noah's father Lamech regarded him as the one who would be the rest-giver and who would provide comfort from the Curse imposed by God on the human race as a result of Adam's disobedience to the Lord's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Genesis 3:17-19

"Then to Adam He said, 'Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it all the days of your life."

"Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field."

"By the sweat of your face you will eat bread, till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; For you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Lamech looked at Noah his son as the one who would bring deliverance from this curse and provide comfort and rest but only the Lord Jesus Christ could provide the human race rest and deliverance from the curse. Therefore, Noah is a type of Christ in that Noah's name meaning, "rest-giver" foreshadows the Lord Jesus who through His obedience to the Father's will in suffering a spiritual death in our place on the cross would deliver us from the curse imposed upon us because of the first Adam's disobedience.

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS."

"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Also, Noah's name and the prophecy of his father Lamech looks forward to the Second Advent of Christ and His millennial reign when the Lord

Jesus Christ will deliver the earth from its curse that it has been under since the day that the first Adam disobeyed the Lord's command to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Isa. 65:19-25; Rom. 8:19-22).

Now, another interesting thing about Noah is that Genesis 6:8 records that Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

God entrusted this great work of building the Ark to Noah alone, which typifies the Lord Jesus who the Father alone entrusted with the work of salvation.

1 Peter 2:24, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed."

The fact that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Great High Priest alone accomplished our so great salvation is typified in Leviticus 16:17 where the high priest in Israel made atonement for the people while alone in the holy of holies.

Leviticus 16:17, "When he goes in to make atonement in the holy place, no one shall be in the tent of meeting until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself and for his household and for all the assembly of Israel."

Noah's work of building the Ark brought blessing to his own family, which typifies the Lord's work on the cross that brought blessing to His family, the church.

Noah's work brought blessing to the living creatures on the earth, which typifies the Second Advent of the Christ, which shall bring blessing to every living creature.

Also, Genesis 6:19 teaches us that God made the entire animal kingdom subject to Noah, which also typifies the Lord Jesus Christ in the desert during his confrontation with Satan where He was with the wild animals.

Mark 1:13, "And He was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild beasts, and the angels were ministering to Him."

Genesis 9:1-3 teaches us that God put all things in subjection to Noah after he accomplished his work

of building the Ark and delivering his family and the animals, which typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who was made the heir of all things after accomplishing His work of salvation on the cross.

Genesis 9:1-3

“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

“The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.”

“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”

Hebrews 1:1, 2

“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways.”

“in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.”

In Genesis 6:21, we see that God made Noah the great food provider for his family and the animals in the Ark, which typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who is the bread of life and Who we are to receive spiritual nourishment from.

Genesis 6:21, “As for you, take for yourself some of all food which is edible, and gather it to yourself; and it shall be for food for you and for them.”

John 6:51, “I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

Genesis 6:22 records Noah’s implicit obedience, which typifies the perfect obedience of our Lord who obeyed the Father’s will and accomplished the work of our salvation.

Genesis 6:22, “Thus Noah did; according to all that God had commanded him, so he did.”

Philippians 2:8, “In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

Genesis 9:1 records that God blessed Noah and his sons after disembarking from the Ark, which foreshadows God blessing us, the Lord’s family with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places because of our union with Christ.

Genesis 9:1, “And God blessed Noah and his sons.”

Ephesians 1:3, “Worthy of praise and glorification is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”

The Typology of the Ark

Just as Noah and his work life parallel the Lord Jesus Christ and His work on the cross so the Ark itself parallels Jesus Christ and His work of salvation on our behalf.

Genesis 6:13-16 teaches that the Ark was a divine provision given to Noah before the Fall came upon the earth.

Genesis 6:13-16

“Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

“This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits (cubit: 17.5 inches long; 300 cubits=437.5 feet wide), its breadth fifty cubits (72.92 feet wide), and its height thirty cubits (43.75 feet high).”

“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

Before the flood came and before the ark was built, a means of escape for His own people existed in the mind of God.

God provided the ark before the waters flooded the earth and not after and so too, He already planned our salvation and provided us a Savior in the Person of Jesus Christ before the foundation of the world.

Acts 2:22, 23

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”

“this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

1 Peter 1:20, “For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.”

Also, notice that God revealed to Noah the design of the ark and ordered him to build it as a place of refuge into which he and his family could flee from the impending judgment upon the earth.

Noah did “not” invent the ark but God had revealed to Noah His plan and design of the ark, which is a type of Christ and so in the same way, God has revealed by His Spirit the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

Now, the material in which God commanded Noah to build the ark with is important as well.

Genesis 6:13, 14

“Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

“Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

The ark was built with gopher wood so before the ark could be built trees obviously would have to be cut down. That which would delivered Noah and his family was obtained by the death of trees teaching the principle that life comes out of death and is secured only by a sacrifice.

John 12:24, 25

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.”

“He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal.”

Just as trees had to be cut down in order to build the ark and deliver Noah and his family, so the Lord Jesus Christ would be cut down in order deliver us from the bondage to sin and Satan.

Daniel 9:26, “Then after the sixty-two weeks the Messiah will be cut off and have nothing, and the people of the prince who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. And its end will come with a flood; even to the end there will be war; desolations are determined.”

Just as the ark was a place of safety and refuge from divine judgment so the believer’s eternal union with Christ is a place of safety and refuge and protection from divine judgment.

Romans 8:1, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Romans 5:9, “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

John 3:18, “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

Just as the ark was a place of total and complete security from the judgment of God so the believer’s eternal union with Christ is a place of

total and absolute security from the judgment of God.

John 10:27-29

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.”

“and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”

“My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.”

1 Peter 1:3-5

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”

“to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”

“who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”

The door in the ark is significant.

Genesis 6:16

“You shall make a window for the ark, and finish it to a cubit from the top; and set the door of the ark in the side of it; you shall make it with lower, second, and third decks.”

The Ark was to have only “one” door, which means that all must enter and leave by the same door and God wanted it this way since the door is a type of Christ.

John 10:9, “I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.”

The door in the Ark teaches that there is only one way to get saved, through faith alone in Christ alone!

John 14:6, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”

Notice too that the ark had three decks. What is the significance of them? Well, first of all, remember the ark itself typifies Jesus Christ and the contents of the ark speak of our spiritual blessings “in” Christ.

The three stories speak of the three-fold nature of our salvation. Salvation means “deliverance.” Therefore, the three stories in the ark speak of our three-fold deliverance from the sin nature, and Satan and his cosmic system that is our permanent possession because of our union with Christ.

Positional: At the moment you exercise faith alone in Christ alone, you are delivered “positionally” (God’s work and viewpoint of the believer) from real spiritual death and eternal condemnation, the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature through the death, resurrection and session of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Experiential: After salvation, the believer is delivered from the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature “experientially” by appropriating by faith the his union and identification with Christ in His death, burial, resurrection and session, which constitutes the believer’s spiritual life after being delivered from real spiritual death.

Ultimate: At the resurrection the believer will be delivered “ultimately” and permanently from the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature when he receives his resurrection body at the rapture of the church, which is imminent.

This three-fold salvation or deliverance embraces our three-fold constitution meaning that our body, soul and human spirit are delivered.

1 Thessalonians 5:23, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The window in the ark is significant as well and was near the roof of the ark. The window near the roof of the ark teaches us that Noah and his family were “not” to be looking at the destruction upon the earth but rather focusing their attention upon God who is in heaven.

In the same way, you and I must be concentrating upon our position with Christ at the right hand of

the Father and praying to our heavenly Father rather than concentrating upon our problems and difficulties on planet earth.

Colossians 3:1, 2

“Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.”

“Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.”

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “pray without ceasing.”

Genesis 6:14 records that Noah was commanded to make the ark with rooms.

Genesis 6:14, “Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.”

“**Rooms**” is the noun *qen* (/Q#) (kane), which refers to a “nest, compartment.” These rooms were resting places for Noah, his family and the animals. These resting places typify the believer resting in the promises of God and his position in Christ.

Hebrews 4:10, “For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.”

Matthew 11:29, “Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.”

Notice that the Lord commanded Noah to cover the ark with pitch inside and out.

“**Pitch**” is the noun *kopher* (rP#K) (ko-fer), which refers to “tar, asphalt.” Large deposits of this semi-liquid mineral have been known to exist around the Dead Sea and in Egypt and Mesopotamia since ancient times.

Noah coated the ark with this material inside and out to keep the ark waterproof. The verb *kopher* means, “to make atonement” and was thus used many times in the Old Testament in relation to the day of atonement when once a year, the high priest in Israel would sacrifice an unblemished lamb and sprinkle its blood upon the mercy seat that rested on top of the Ark of the Covenant.

The cherubim looking down upon the blood on the mercy seat portrayed the righteousness and justice of God looking upon the death of the Lamb of God and being satisfied with His sacrifice as the payment for our sins.

1 John 2:2, “And He Himself (the Lord Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

Lastly, Genesis 8:4 records that after the flood waters receded that the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat, which is in Turkey.

Genesis 8:4, “In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat.”

The ark resting on the mountains of Ararat typifies Christ finishing His work on the Cross for our salvation. Just as the Ark “finished” its mission, so Christ “finished” His work of salvation.

John 19:30, “Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, ‘It is finished!’ And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”

Genesis 7

Genesis 7:1-5 records Noah’s obedience to the Lord’s command to enter the ark.

Genesis 7:1

“Then the LORD said to Noah, ‘Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.’”

The term *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” is used alone in Genesis 7 and not *Elohim*, “**God**” or *Yahweh Elohim*, “**Lord God**,” which is significant since the term *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” is the covenant-keeping personal name of God used in connection with man’s salvation and emphasizing the personal relationship that Noah had with the Lord and the personal attention that Noah was receiving from God.

“For you (Noah) alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time,” means that Noah trusted in Jesus Christ as His Savior and as a result God imputed His righteousness to Noah and it also means that Noah lived in that righteousness

by being obedient to God's Word and fulfilled his obligations to both love God and his fellow human being.

Noah was considered to be righteous before the Lord because he had faith in the Lord, which was expressed by his obedience to the Lord's commands.

Hebrews 11:7, "By means of faith, Noah, after having received a divine warning concerning the things which at the time were not yet seen, and having responding reverentially built an ark for the deliverance of his household through which (faith) he rendered the wickedness of the world more evident and censurable and as a result he became a possessor of divine righteousness because of his faith."

Genesis 7:2

"You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female."

Genesis 7:3

"also of the birds of the sky, by sevens, male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

Genesis 7:2-3 gives us specific information regarding the command the Lord gave to Noah that is recorded in Genesis 6:19-20.

Genesis 6:19, 20

"And of every living thing of all flesh, you shall bring two of every kind into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female."

"Of the birds after their kind, and of the animals after their kind, of every creeping thing of the ground after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive."

Genesis 7:2-3 divides the living creatures on the earth and the birds into two categories: (1)

"Clean": used for sacrificial purposes (2)

"Unclean": Not used for sacrificial purposes.

Genesis 6:19-20 does not make a distinction between the living creatures on the earth and the

birds but mentions them in a general or universal sense whereas Genesis 7:2-3 makes distinctions among them.

"Animal" is the collective noun *b^ehemah* (be-hay-maw) and refers to both domestic and non-domestic animals.

A **"clean"** animal is one that is acceptable to the Lord for sacrificial purposes.

Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 give the criteria for what constitutes a **"clean"** and **"unclean"** animal but all such distinctions have been removed according to Mark 7:19, Acts 10:9-15 and 1 Timothy 4:4.

The **"clean"** animals that were taken aboard the ark were used for sacrifices after the Flood subsided and Noah and his family disembarked from the ark (Gen. 8:22-23).

Genesis 8:20, 21

"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."

"The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, 'I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.'"

The phrase **"by sevens"** is the Hebrew expression *shiv'ah shiv'ah* (hu*b+v! hu*b+v!), which literally means, "seven by seven," indicating that "seven pairs" of "clean" animals and birds were brought onto the ark as confirmed by the phrase **"a male and his female,"** thus fourteen clean animals and birds were brought onto the ark.

These clean animals, which would be sacrificed, would "portray" the impeccable human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ and their being sacrificed would also "portray" our Lord's substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross.

1 Peter 1:18, 19

"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers."

“but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”

The number seven is significant in the Bible since it is the number of “spiritual perfection,” therefore, the seven pairs of clean animals brought onto the ark, which portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, speaks of the “spiritual perfection” of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

In Genesis 7:2-3, the Lord commanded Noah to bring seven pairs of each “clean” animal and bird and two of each kind of “unclean” animal in order to repopulate the earth when the Flood had subsided.

Genesis 7:4, “For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”

Genesis 7:4 teaches that this command in Genesis 7:1-3 to enter the ark came one week before the Great Flood.

“**Thing**” is the noun *y^equm* (šWqy+) (yek-oom), which means, “all existence” and is a “collective” noun meaning that even though it is in the singular, it designates a group and encompasses both humans and animals and birds and all vegetation.

In Genesis 7:4, the Lord was reiterating to Noah what He told him in Genesis 6:13 and 17.

Genesis 6:13, “Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

Genesis 6:17, “Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish.”

The fact that the Lord was about to destroy the entire earth and kill every living creature and all vegetation on the earth as well as every human being indicates that the Flood was “universal” and not “local.” Critics of the Bible state that the Flood of Noah was “local” meaning that it did not

encompass the entire earth but rather a particular local area.

Genesis 7:4

“For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made.”

In the Bible, forty is the number of trial and patience in both the Old Testament (Num. 14:33-34; Deut. 25:3) and New Testament (Matt. 4:2; Acts 1:3). Therefore, in Genesis 7:4, “**forty days and forty nights**” speaks of the patience and faith of Noah throughout the great period of trial when this great flood destroyed earth.

Genesis 7:5

“Noah did according to all that the LORD had commanded him.”

Genesis 7:5 records once again the obedience of Noah just as Genesis 6:22 does. Noah’s obedience to the Lord’s command to build and enter the ark demonstrated not only his faith but also his love for the Lord and that he was experiencing fellowship with the Lord.

John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

1 John 2:3-5

“Now, by means of this, we can confirm that we know Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) experientially: if any of us at any time does observe conscientiously His (the Lord Jesus Christ’s) commands.”

“The one who at any time does say, ‘I know Him experientially,’ and yet at any time does not observe conscientiously His commands, is a liar and furthermore, the truth is unequivocally not in him.”

“But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

Obedience is the supreme test of trust in the Lord and His promises as well as reverence and respect

for Him and characterizes faith in the Lord. The impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union was the perfect example of obedience to the Father's will.

Philippians 2:8, "In fact, although He (the Lord Jesus Christ) was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross."

Genesis 7:6-16 records the beginning of the Flood.

Genesis 7:6

"Now Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of water came upon the earth."

Genesis 7:6 records the fact that when the flood came, Noah was six hundred years old and Genesis 5:32 records that he was five hundred years old when he became the father of Shem who was followed by Ham and Japheth.

Genesis 5:32, "Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah became the father of Shem ("name"), Ham ("dark"), and Japheth ("fair")."

Genesis 6:10-13 records that at the time Noah became the father of three sons that God told him that He was going to destroy the earth with a flood and the Lord commanded Noah to build an ark to preserve him and his family and two of every kind of animal and bird as well seven pairs of clean animals.

Genesis 6:10-14

"Noah became the father of three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth."

"Now the earth was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence."

"God looked on the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth."

"Then God said to Noah, 'The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.'"

"Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch."

Therefore, a comparison of Genesis 5:32, 6:10-14 and 7:6 indicates that it took at least one hundred years to build the ark. During this time, Noah proclaimed the gospel according to 2 Peter 2:5.

2 Peter 2:4, 5

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment."

"and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly."

Genesis 7:7

"Then Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him entered the ark because of the water of the flood."

Genesis 7:7 is a repetition of Genesis 6:18.

Eight human beings entered the ark and they were all saved since the judgment of the flood was upon the unregenerate humanity and the half-men and half-angels.

Principle: God never pours His wrath out on His children nor does He judge His children but only the unbeliever since John 3:18 teaches that if you have believed in Christ you are not under judgment and if you have rejected Christ you are already under judgment.

John 3:18, "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

This is why the church will never go through the Tribulation period, which is a time where God pours out His wrath upon the unbelievers who have rejected His Son as Savior.

1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10

"For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come."

Genesis 7:8

“Of clean animals and animals that are not clean and birds and everything that creeps on the ground.”

Genesis 7:9

“there went into the ark to Noah by twos, male and female, as God had commanded Noah.”

Genesis 7:8-9 is a repetition of Genesis 6:18-19 and the reference to the “**clean**” animals in Genesis 7:8 is a repetition of Genesis 7:2-3.

Genesis 7:10

“It came about after the seven days, that the water of the flood came upon the earth.”

Genesis 7:7-10 indicates that it took one week for Noah and his family and all the animals to enter the ark since the water of the flood did not arrive until after seven days.

Genesis 7:11

“In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.”

The dating of the arrival of the Flood raises the question as to what calendar was in use when Moses wrote Genesis. Was it the “civil” calendar, which began the year in late fall or was it the “religious” calendar, which began the year in the spring?

The first month of the “civil” calendar was “Tishri,” which corresponds to September/October and the second month was “Marheshvan,” which corresponds with October/November and the autumn equinox. So if Moses was using the “civil” calendar when he wrote Genesis 7:11, then the Flood began in September/October in the Jewish month of “Marheshvan.”

The Jewish historian “Josephus” wrote that the Flood began in the autumn. Those who support the position that the Flood came in the autumn state that the flood would have taken place right after the fall harvest, which would supply food for Noah, his family and the animals on the ark. This is rather weak support since there would not have

been enough time to store the food if the Flood began right after the harvest.

Furthermore, food could have been stored from the previous harvests. The first month of the “religious” calendar was “Nisan,” which corresponds to March/April and the second month was “Iyyar,” which corresponds with April/May. So if Moses was using the “religious” calendar when he wrote Genesis 7:11, then the Flood began in April/May in the Jewish month of “Iyyar.”

The answer to this question is easy if we consider who Moses was writing to when he wrote Genesis 7:11. Moses wrote Genesis 7:11 and the entire Pentateuch for the benefit of the nation of Israel who would be familiar with the “religious” calendar. Therefore, the “**second month**” referred to in Genesis 7:11 refers to the Jewish month of “Iyyar,” which corresponds with April/May.

According to Genesis 8:14-15, Noah and his family left the ark a little over a year later or 371 days.

Genesis 7:11 identify two sources of the Flood waters: (1) “**All the fountains of the great deep burst open**” (2) “**The floodgates of the sky were opened.**”

“**The fountains of the great deep**” refers to the vast springs or reservoirs of water that resided in pockets deep in the earth’s crust, which were put there by the Lord when on the third day of restoration He restored the dry land by gathering the waters that completely flooded the earth, which is recorded in Genesis 1:9-13.

These subterranean waters bursting open indicates violent earthquake action and had enormous geophysical implications resulting in tremendous upheavals on the earth such as the sinking of land areas and the raising of sea bottoms and was responsible for the present geography and topography in the world today.

The Antediluvian period, there was a single super continent, but the Flood broke this continent up into seven continents during the days of Noah and was responsible for the earth now being tilted on its axis, which resulted sudden freezing in the extreme north and south regions of planet earth.

“**The floodgates of the sky were opened**” refers to the vast transparent water vapor canopy that resided above the earth’s atmosphere, which were placed there by the Lord on the second day of restoration, which is recorded Genesis 1:6-8.

Genesis 1:6, 7

“Then God said, ‘Let there be an expanse (**Hebrew: *raqia*, “atmosphere”**) in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.’”

“God made the expanse (Hebrew: *raqia*, “atmosphere”), and separated the waters which were below the expanse (Hebrew: *raqia*, “atmosphere”) from the waters which were above the expanse (Hebrew: *raqia*, “atmosphere”); and it was so.” NASU

The vast transparent water vapor canopy that resided above the earth’s atmosphere and precipitated in the days of Noah gave the Pre-Flood earth a warm climate and produced a greenhouse effect with no storms in the earth’s atmosphere. This environment during the antediluvian period was changed radically and dramatically with the flood that took place in the days of Noah.

Therefore, the antediluvian world was radically different climatically and geologically from the “**present heavens and the earth**” (2 Pet. 3:7). During the antediluvian period the entire earth was warm all year round, having no storms because of this vast transparent water vapor canopy but when it precipitated during the flood of Noah, there became “**cold and heat, and summer and winter**” according to Genesis 8:22 and the emergence of the North and South Poles.

Genesis 8:22, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

Genesis 7:12

“**The rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights.**”

The Lord repeats what He said to Noah in Genesis 7:4. Genesis 7:4 and 12 refers to the precipitation of the vast transparent water vapor canopy.

In the Bible, forty is the number of trial and patience in both the Old Testament (Num. 14:33-34; Deut. 25:3) and New Testament (Matt. 4:2; Acts 1:3). Therefore, in Genesis 7:4 and 12, “**forty days and forty nights**” speaks of the patience and faith of Noah throughout the great period of trial when this worldwide flood destroyed earth.

Genesis 7:13

“**On the very same day Noah and Shem and Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark.**”

Eight people entered the ark: (1) Noah (2) Noah’s wife (3) Shem (4) Shem’s wife (5) Ham (6) Ham’s wife (7) Japheth (8) Japheth’s wife.

After Noah left the ark, the Lord would issue a command to these eight people to repopulate the earth, which is recorded in Genesis 9:1.

Genesis 9:1, ‘And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”’

All eight were saved as we noted earlier.

Genesis 7:14

“**they and every beast** (Hebrew: *chayyah* “wild animals”) **after its kind, and all the cattle** (Hebrew: *b^ehemah* “domestic animals”) **after their kind, and every creeping thing** (Hebrew: *remes* “creepers-crawlers”-insects, small reptiles, most amphibians and small mammals) **that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, all sorts of birds.**”

Genesis 7:15

“**So they went into the ark to Noah, by twos of all flesh in which was the breath of life.**”

Genesis 7:16

“**Those that entered, male and female of all flesh, entered as God had commanded him; and the LORD closed it behind him.**”

The fact that the Lord closed the ark behind Noah is a picture of grace, which is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to mankind based upon the merits of the Person and Finished Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Grace means

that God does the work and we reap the benefits by faith in Him.

The fact that the Lord closed the ark behind Noah and that Noah did not do it for himself is a reminder to Noah and his family that the Lord “alone” delivered him and his family from the Flood and that Noah did “not” deliver himself.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

“not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Chronology of the Flood up to this point: (1) Noah entered the ark on tenth day of the second month (Iyyar) and waited in the ark seven days (Gen. 7:7-10). (2) The vast transparent water vapor canopy precipitated and the subterranean waters burst open on the seventeenth day of the second month (Gen. 7:10-11). (3) The vast transparent water vapor canopy precipitated or fell upon the earth for forty days and nights (Gen. 7:12).

Genesis 7:17-24 records the extent of the Flood. As we have noted, critics of the Bible state that the Flood of Noah was “local” meaning that it did not encompass the entire earth but rather a particular local area or region.

Genesis 7:17-24 provides us with many reasons why the Flood that took place in the days of Noah was “universal” meaning it encompassed and destroyed the entire earth and was not confined to a particular geographical region of the earth.

Genesis 6:1-7:16 also provides us with many reasons that demonstrate that the Bible is describing a worldwide Flood and not a local flood.

Genesis 6:7, “The LORD said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I have made them.’”

“**Blot out**” is the verb *machah* (h^j*m*) (maw-khaw), which is used in the sense of the annihilation and obliteration of all human beings and animals and birds from the face of the earth,

thus indicating that the Flood during the days of Noah was “universal” and not local.

Genesis 6:11-12 also records that “all” of the earth’s inhabitants were corrupt in the sight of God and if all were corrupt then the Flood was universal.

Genesis 6:11, 12

“Now the earth (earth’s inhabitants) was corrupt in the sight of God, and the earth was filled with violence.”

“God looked on the earth (earth’s inhabitants), and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”

The phrases “**the earth, the earth (earth’s inhabitants) was corrupt**” and “**the earth was filled with violence**” are also further indications that the Flood was universal since if the Flood was local, God would not have used the phrase “**the earth**” but rather would have described a particular geographical region on the earth.

The phrase “**all flesh**” further indicates that Flood was worldwide since it refers to the entire human race, thus if the Flood was local God would not have used this expression but would have pointed a particular group of people.

Genesis 6:13, “Then God said to Noah, ‘The end of all flesh has come before Me; for the earth is filled with violence because of them; and behold, I am about to destroy them with the earth.’”

The fact that God said that He would destroy all the inhabitants of the earth because of their wickedness, clearly indicates that the Flood in the days of Noah was “universal” and not “local” as the critics of the Bible contend.

“**Destroy**” is the verb *shachath* (tj[^]v^v*) (shaw-khath), which refers to the act of God in totally and completely destroying the entire human race with the earth and in particular the water underneath the earth and above its atmosphere, thus, indicating that the Flood was worldwide and not local.

Genesis 6:17, “Behold, I, even I am bringing the flood of water upon the earth, to destroy all flesh in which is the breath of life, from

under heaven; everything that is on the earth shall perish."

The phrase "**to destroy all flesh**" clearly indicates the Flood was worldwide since if it were confined to a particular region of the earth, God would not have used this expression but rather one that referred to a particular group of people located in a particular region.

"**Everything that is on the earth will perish**" clearly indicates that the Flood was worldwide since if it was local, God would not have used such an all inclusive word such as the Hebrew adjective *kol*, "**everything**" but would have used a different word or expression.

Genesis 7:1, "Then the LORD said to Noah, 'Enter the ark, you and all your household, for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.'"

The fact that the Lord singled out Noah from the entire human race as the only one as being righteous on the earth is further indication that the Flood was universal since if it was local the Lord would have mentioned other individuals as being righteous.

Genesis 7:2-4

"You shall take with you of every clean animal by sevens, a male and his female; and of the animals that are not clean two, a male and his female."

"also of the birds of the sky, by sevens ("**seven pairs**"), male and female, to keep offspring alive on the face of all the earth."

"For after seven more days, I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights; and I will blot out from the face of the land every living thing that I have made."

"**I will blot out**" is the verb *machah* (h^j*m*) (maw-khaw), which is used in the sense of the annihilation and obliteration of all human beings and animals and birds from the face of the earth, thus indicating that the Flood during the days of Noah was "universal" and not local.

"**Every living thing**" is the Hebrew expression *eth-kol-hayqum*, which is an expression that encompasses every living creature on the earth and

further indicates that the Flood was universal and if it was local, the Lord would not have used this expression.

"**Thing**" is the noun *y^equm* (sWqy+) (yek-oom), which means, "all existence" and is a "collective" noun meaning that even though it is in the singular, it designates a group and encompasses both humans and animals and birds and all vegetation.

The fact that the Lord was about to destroy the entire earth and kill every living creature and all vegetation on the earth as well as every human being indicates that the Flood was "universal" and not "local."

The New Testament confirms the Genesis record that the Flood was worldwide.

1 Peter 3:18-20

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit."

"in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison."

"who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water."

1 Peter 3:20 clearly states that the Flood was universal since Peter teaches that only a "**few, that is eight persons were brought safely through the water.**"

2 Peter 2:4, 5

"For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment."

"and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly."

2 Peter 2:5 teaches that the Flood was worldwide since Peter teaches that God did not spare the antediluvian world but only Noah and his family.

Genesis 7:17

“Then the flood came upon the earth for forty days, and the water increased and lifted up the ark, so that it rose above the earth.”

“**The flood**” is the articular noun *mabbul* (IWBm^)\ (mab-bool), which in the Old Testament always refers to the flood that took place during the days of Noah.

Genesis 7:18

“The water prevailed and increased greatly upon the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water.”

The fact that the Flood was worldwide is indicated by the fact that the water rise was quickly sufficient to have the ark float indicating a depth of at least twenty feet in the earliest stages of the Flood, since the Ark was at least forty-four feet in height and heavily loaded.

The ark was far too large to accommodate a mere regional flood and was more than adequate to house two of every species of land animal in the entire world, living or extinct.

Furthermore, as the rains continued, the waters “**prevailed**,” a word in the Hebrew, which means literally, “were overwhelmingly mighty,” and would be quite inappropriate in the setting of a local flood.

If the Flood were not universal, then the construction, outfitting and stocking of the Ark, so that it “**floated on the surface of the water**” would have been an absurd waste of time and materials. Migration would have been a far better solution to the problem, for Noah as well as the birds and beasts.

Genesis 7:19

“The water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered.”

The double superlative “**all the high mountains under all the heavens**” cannot possibly be used in a relative sense as the proponents of the local flood theory contend.

Genesis 7:20

“The water prevailed fifteen cubits higher, and the mountains were covered.”

The fact that the water covered everything under heaven and in fact the high mountains is further indication that the Flood was universal.

“**Fifteen cubits**” is approximately 22 feet indicating the least depth of the water at any spot on the globe meaning above the highest mountains since they were covered. Therefore, the Flood covered the mountains of Ararat, which the Ark eventually rested on.

The highest peak in this mountain range is 17,000 feet. A 17,000-foot Flood is not a “local” flood.

Genesis 7:21

“All flesh that moved on the earth perished, birds and cattle and beasts and every swarming thing that swarms upon the earth, and all mankind.”

The expression “**all flesh that moved on the earth perished**” indicates a universal flood since if it was a local flood, most creatures would escape death.

Genesis 7:22

“of all that was on the dry land, all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, died.”

In a local flood most people escape but the fact that Genesis 7:22 says that every human being died indicates that this was not a local flood. A local flood would not have reached every human being.

Genesis 7:23

“Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.”

“**Every living thing**” is the Hebrew expression *eth-kol-hayqum*, which is an expression that encompasses every living creature on the earth and further indicates that the Flood was universal.

“**Thing**” is the noun *y^equm* (sWqy+) (yek-oom), which means, “all existence” and is a “collective”

noun meaning that even though it is in the singular, it designates a group and encompasses both humans and animals and birds and all vegetation.

The fact that Noah and his family were the only ones that survived the flood is further indication that this flood was worldwide.

Genesis 7:24

“The water prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days.”

Further evidence that the Flood during the days of Noah was universal is that no local flood continues to rise for 150 days. The fact that even after four months of receding flood waters, the dove sent out by Noah could find no dry land on which to light indicates that the Flood during the days of Noah was worldwide (Gen. 8:9). The fact that it was over an entire year (7:11; 8:13) before enough land had been exposed to permit Noah and his family leave the Ark is further evidence that the Flood was universal.

It is shocking that there are many Christians endorse a local flood theory because they have been intimidated by the pretensions of modern scholarship and that they would sooner give up **“the praise of God”** than **“the praise of men”** (John 12:43).

Also, further indicating a worldwide flood is that God promised that He would never destroy the earth again with a flood and if the flood during the days of Noah was local, then that promise would have been repeatedly broken if it were a local or regional flood.

The New Testament uses a unique term *kataklysmos*, “cataclysm” for the Flood (Mt. 24:39; Lk. 17:27; 2 Pet. 2:5; 3:6) instead of the usual Greek word for “flood.”

Also, later Biblical writers accepted the universal Flood (Job 12:15; 22:16; Ps. 29:10; 104:6-9; Is. 54:9; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5; 3:5-6; Heb. 11:7).

Lastly, further indicating that the flood during the days of Noah was worldwide is that the Lord Jesus Christ accepted the historicity and universality of the Flood, even making it the climatic sign and type of His Second Advent (Mt. 24:37-39; Lk. 17:26-27).

Genesis 8

Genesis 8:1-14 records the Flood subsiding and then finally ending.

Genesis 8:1

“But God remembered Noah and all the beasts (*chayyah* “wild animals”) and all the cattle (*b^ehemah* “domestic animals”) that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.”

When the Bible says, **“God remembered Noah”** it does “not” mean that He had forgotten Noah but rather it signifies that God is about to act upon a previous commitment and contract He made with Noah that is recorded in Genesis 6:18 and by acting on His earlier promise to Noah, God demonstrates Himself to be a trustworthy covenant partner.

“A wind” is the noun *ruach* (j[^]Wr) (roo-akh) is correctly translated referring to air in motion that moves along the surface of the earth or in Genesis 8:1, air that moves across the surface of the Flood waters in order to evaporate these waters sufficiently so that Noah and his family could finally leave the Ark.

Genesis 8:2

“Also the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky were closed, and the rain from the sky was restrained.”

According to Genesis 8:1, the two sources of water that God employed to flood the earth are prevented from doing their damage: (1) **“All the fountains of the great deep burst open”** (2) **“The floodgates of the sky were opened.”**

“The fountains of the great deep” refers to the vast springs or reservoirs of water that resided in pockets deep in the earth’s crust, which were put there by the Lord when on the third day of restoration He restored the dry land by gathering the waters that completely flooded the earth, which is recorded in Genesis 1:9-13.

“The floodgates of the sky were opened” refers to the vast transparent water vapor canopy that resided above the earth’s atmosphere, which were placed there by the Lord on the second day of restoration, which is recorded Genesis 1:6-8.

Genesis 8:1-2 records three specific actions that were taken by God:

- (1) God caused a wind to pass over the earth in order to evaporate vast quantities of water.
- (2) God shut up the subterranean waters from further eruptions.
- (3) The water from the vast water transparent vapor canopy was precipitated and God put an end to the rain.

With the vast transparent water vapor canopy gone, sharp temperatures differentials would have been established between equator and poles and great air movements would have begun.

These would be complicated by the earth's rotation, so that the present complex system of atmospheric circulations would finally be initiated. The early phases of this would have been violent. With nothing but a shoreless ocean, these winds would generate tremendous waves and currents, and vast quantities of water would be evaporated, especially in the equatorial regions.

However, winds, waves and evaporation could hardly account in themselves for more than a minor lowering of water level. Unless of course the winds were so violent as to sweep quantities of water clear off into outer space, which seems impossible on a nonsupernatural basis. Somehow there must also be a drastic rearrangement of the earth's topography, with continental landmasses rising from the waters, and ocean basins deepening and widening to receive the waters draining off the lands. This is what happened according to Psalm 104:6-9.

Psalm 104:5-9

"He established the earth upon its foundations, so that it will not totter forever and ever."

"You covered it with the deep as with a garment; The waters were standing above the mountains."

"At Your rebuke they fled, at the sound of Your thunder they hurried away."

"The mountains rose; the valleys sank down to the place which You established for them."

"You set a boundary that they may not pass over, so that they will not return to cover the earth."

During the Flood itself, the breaking up of the great deep complex of subterranean reservoirs and conduits, the tremendous release of heat energy, and the outflow of great quantities of water and magma without a doubt left the earth's crust highly unstable. The erosion of the antediluvian mountains and continents had resulted in the deposition of great quantities of sediment in the seas. These great subterranean caverns were no longer pressurized and collapsed and the surface elevations sank correspondingly.

Genesis 8:3

"and the water receded steadily from the earth, and at the end of one hundred and fifty days the water decreased."

Genesis 7:24 records that the Flood waters prevailed for one hundred and fifty days and Genesis 8:3 records that they receded steadily in the same amount of time.

Genesis 8:4, 5

"In the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat."

"The water decreased steadily until the tenth month; in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains became visible."

The Ark rested on the highest peak in this mountain range since Genesis 8:4 records that the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat and Genesis 8:5 indicates that on the first day of the tenth month, the tops of the mountains could be seen and this could only happen if the Ark was on the highest peak.

The highest peak in the Ararat mountain range is Mount Ararat, which is 16,945 feet above sea level in Armenia where today the frontiers of Turkey, Iran and Russia converge in the general area of the Caspian and the Black Seas (cf. 2 Kgs. 19:37; Jer. 51:27).

Chronology of the Flood up to Genesis 8:4:

(1) According to Genesis 7:7-9, Noah entered the ark on tenth day of the second month (Iyyar) and waited in the ark seven days (Gen. 7:10).

(2) According to Genesis 7:10-11, seven days after Noah entered the Ark, the vast transparent water vapor canopy precipitated and the subterranean waters burst open on the seventeenth day of the second month.

(3) According to Genesis 7:12, the vast transparent water vapor canopy precipitated or fell upon the earth for forty days and nights and stopped on the twenty-seventh day of the third month.

(4) According to Genesis 7:24 and 8:3-4, one hundred ten days after the heavy rains of the forty day and nights had stopped, the waters of the Flood receded and the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat.

Exactly five months after the Flood began, the Ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat since Genesis 7:11 records that the Flood began on the seventeenth day of the second month and Genesis 8:4 records that the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month. This means that Noah and his family had been in the Ark for one hundred and fifty seven days up to this point in the narrative. It would be another seven months before they were able to leave since they had to wait for the waters to recede and the ground to dry sufficiently so it could support human and animal and bird life.

It is significant that the Ark is said to have “rested” as though it had been laboring for five months in accomplishing its work of saving its occupants from sin and judgment. This is the second mention of “rest” in Scripture with the first being when God rested after His work of restoring the earth in six days (Gen. 2:2-3). It is interesting since the Ark is a type of Christ as God “finished” His work of creation and as the Ark “finished” its mission, so Christ “finished” (John 19:30) His work of salvation.

A comparison of 8:4 with 8:5 indicates that seventy-four days or two and a half months after the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, the tops

of the mountains appeared on the first day of the tenth month.

Genesis 8:6

“Then it came about at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.”

A comparison of Genesis 8:5 and 6 teaches that forty days after the tops of the mountains appeared, Noah opened the window of the Ark, which would be on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

Genesis 8:7-9

“and he sent out a raven, and it flew here and there until the water was dried up from the earth.”

“Then he sent out a dove from him, to see if the water was abated from the face of the land.”

“but the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, so she returned to him into the ark, for the water was on the surface of all the earth. Then he put out his hand and took her, and brought her into the ark to himself.”

It appears that Noah was not able to make any definite observations after opening the window of the Ark. Therefore, on the eleventh day of the eleventh month he sent out a raven and a dove on reconnaissance missions in order to ascertain the situation outside and to determine if the earth could support animal and bird life and human life.

The raven is a scavenger bird and found carrion in abundance, floating probably on the waters, and did not need to return but the dove returns to Noah indicating that the earth was not ready to support life since it is not a scavenger like the raven.

Genesis 8:10, 11

“So he waited yet another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark.”

“The dove came to him toward evening, and behold, in her beak was a freshly picked olive leaf. So Noah knew that the water was abated from the earth.”

On the eighteenth day of the eleventh month, Noah sends out the dove again a second time seven days after he sent the dove out the first time

and this time the dove returned with a freshly picked olive leaf indicating that seedlings or cuttings from the hardy olive tree were already beginning to grow again on the mountainsides.

Genesis 8:12

“Then he waited yet another seven days, and sent out the dove; but she did not return to him again.”

On the twenty-fifth day of the eleventh month, seven days after sending the dove out a second time, Noah sent out the dove again a third time, which didn't return indicating to Noah that the land was sufficiently dry and vegetation sufficiently established to support bird life.

Noah didn't immediately leave the Ark after the dove failed to return but instead waiting another twenty-two days before he removed the covering from the Ark and then it was another fifty-seven days before he finally did leave the Ark.

This is indicated by the following events:

- (1) The waters of the Flood receded steadily for one hundred fifty days according to Genesis 8:3.
- (2) On the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat according to Genesis 8:4.
- (3) On the first day of the tenth month, seventy-four days after the Ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, the mountain tops appeared to Noah according to Genesis 8:5.
- (4) Forty-days later, Noah sent out a raven, which didn't return and a dove, which did, according to Genesis 8:6-9.
- (5) Seven days later, Noah sent out the dove a second time and this time it returned with a freshly picked olive branch according to Genesis 8:10.
- (6) Seven days later, Noah sent out the dove a third time but this time she didn't return, according to Genesis 8:12.

During all this one hundred twenty eight days elapsed, thus indicating that Noah waited still another twenty-two days after sending out the dove out a third time before he removed the

covering of the Ark since Genesis 8:3 records that the water receded steadily for one hundred and fifty days.

Genesis 8:13, 14

“Now it came about in the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first of the month, the water was dried up from the earth. Then Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and behold, the surface of the ground was dried up.”

“In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.”

A comparison of Genesis 8:13 and 14-16 indicates that Noah waited another fifty-seven days after removing the covering of the Ark before he and his family finally exited the Ark. Noah, his family and the animals were in the Ark a total of one year and seventeen days. A year according to the Jewish calendar is three hundred and sixty days and a month is thirty days.

1 Peter 3:20-21 teaches that the Flood in the days of Noah typifies the baptism of the Holy Spirit and our salvation.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between 2 historical entities; the former is indirect and implicit, the latter direct and explicit. A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ and our salvation.

In 1 Peter 3:20-21, the apostle Peter teaches that the deliverance of Noah and his family from the Flood corresponds to or it typifies or parallels the baptism of the Spirit and our salvation.

1 Peter 3:1-21

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

“in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.”

“who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of

Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you -- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

The Baptism of the Spirit takes place exclusively during the dispensation of the church age and is accomplished at the moment of salvation when the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit places the believer in an eternal union with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

The Baptism of the Spirit identifies the believer positionally with Christ in His crucifixion (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6), death (Rom. 6:3-5, Col. 2:20; 3:3), burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), resurrection (Rom. 6:4, 9; 7:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1) and session (Eph. 2:6).

When I say that the Spirit “identifies” us with Christ, I mean that at the moment of salvation, the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit causes the believer to become identical and united with Christ and also ascribes to the believer the qualities and characteristics of Christ.

When I say “positionally” I am referring to what God has done for the church age believer and His viewpoint of the church age believer meaning He views the believer as He views His Son and does “not” view the believer according to his sins and transgressions and former manner of life prior to salvation.

Notice that it is not water baptism that saves us but rather the baptism of the Spirit. Our faith in Christ enables the Holy Spirit to deliver us from sin, Satan and his cosmic system.

1 Peter 3:21, “Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you -- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Water baptism was a teaching aid to instruct believers that when they believed in Christ, the

Holy Spirit placed them in union with Christ identifying them with Christ in His death and resurrection.

When the believer was dipped underneath the water, this portrayed the reality that the Holy Spirit identified them with Christ in His death and when they were taken up out of the water, they were identified with Christ in His resurrection. When the believer was dipped underneath the water, this portrayed that he was now dead to the cosmic system of Satan and the old sin nature and when he was taken up out of the water, this portrayed the fact that he was now a new creation and was to walk in newness of life.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit delivers the believer from his old sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system just as the Ark, which is a picture of Christ, delivered Noah and his family from the judgment of the antediluvian world that was marred by sin and ruled by Satan.

Just as the Ark delivered Noah and his family from the judgment of the old creation and delivered them safely to a new world after the Flood so the baptism of the Spirit delivers us from the judgment of the old creation and delivers us safely to a new life in a new world in resurrection bodies in the new heavens and new earth.

Baptism meant a clean break with the past and the old creation marred by sin and ruled by Satan just as Noah and his family made a clean break with the old creation.

2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

Romans 6:1-3

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?”

“May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?”

“Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?”

“Baptized into Christ Jesus” refers to the believer’s union with Christ.

“Baptized into His death” refers to “retroactive” positional truth, which refers to the fact that God considers you to have died with Christ (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12).

Colossians 2:12, “having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

Romans 6:4, “Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

“Walk in newness of life” refers to “experiential” sanctification, which is the post-salvation experience of the believer who is in fellowship with God, which is accomplished by confessing any known sin to the Father when necessary and then immediately obeying the Word of God.

“Experiential” sanctification is only a *potential* since it is contingent upon the believer obeying the Word of God.

Just as Noah and his family were delivered by the Ark in order to begin a new life free from the sin of the old creation and tyranny of Satan so the Holy Spirit identified us with Christ in His death in order that we might begin a new life under the rulership of Christ.

Romans 6:5, “For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

“United with Him...in the likeness of His resurrection” refers to “ultimate” sanctification, which is the guarantee of resurrection body and will be experienced by every believer regardless of their response in time to what God has done for them at the moment of salvation.

Romans 6:6, “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

Just as Noah and his family were dead to the old creation so the believer is dead to the old creation and the sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan

because he has been crucified and died with Christ.

1 Peter 3:18-21

“For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.”

“in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison.”

“who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.”

“Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you -- not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience -- through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

Genesis 8:15-22 records God commanding Noah to leave the Ark. Noah, his family and the animals were in the Ark a total of one year and seventeen days. The earth was “not” completely annihilated by the Flood but rather it was drastically changed.

There were many physical changes upon the earth after the Flood:

(1) The oceans were much more vast since they now contained all the waters, which once formed the vast transparent water vapor canopy above the earth’s atmosphere.

(2) The land areas were not as vast as they were prior to the Flood with a much greater portion of the earth’s surface uninhabitable for this reason.

(3) The vast transparent water vapor canopy above the earth’s atmosphere had dissipated so that strong temperature differentials were inaugurated leading to a gradual build up of snow and ice in the polar latitudes rendering much of the extreme north and southern land surfaces also essentially uninhabitable.

(4) Mountain ranges rose up after the Flood emphasizing the more rugged topography of the postdiluvian continents with many of these regions also becoming unfit for humans.

(5) Winds, storms, rains and snows were possible now, thus rendering the total environment less congenial to man and animals than had once been the case prior to the Flood.

(6) The environment was much more hostile because of harmful radiation from outer space, which was no longer filtered out by the vast transparent water vapor canopy above the earth's atmosphere resulting in the gradual reduction in length of human life after the Flood.

Genesis 8:15-16

“Then God spoke to Noah, saying, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons' wives with you.’”

Genesis 8:17

“Bring out with you every living thing (*chayyah* “wild or non-domestic animals”) of all flesh that is with you, birds and animals (*b^ehemah*

“domestic animals”) **and every creeping thing (*remes***

“creepers-crawlers” referring to insects, small reptiles, most amphibians and small mammals or in other words, every animal with the exception of the larger domestic and non-domestic animals) **that creeps on the earth, that they may breed abundantly on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”**

Genesis 8:18, 19

“So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him.”

“Every beast, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out by their families from the ark.”

Notice that Noah did not immediately leave the Ark when the earth was dry but instead waited until God commanded him to leave the Ark, thus, demonstrating Noah's implicit trust or faith in the Lord expressed by his obedience. Noah's obedience to the Lord demonstrated not only his faith but also his love for the Lord and that he was experiencing fellowship with the Lord.

John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

1 John 2:3, “Now, by means of this, we can confirm that we know Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) experientially: if any of us at any time does observe conscientiously His (the Lord Jesus Christ's) commands.”

The command to the animals and birds indicates that all the earth's present dry-land animals are descendants of those that were on the Ark. Also, all the present tribes and nations of men are descended from Noah's family, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives.

Genesis 8:20

“Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal (*b^ehemah*

“domestic animals”) **and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.”**

Noah's first act after emerging from the Ark was to worship the Lord and was the first recorded instance of a believer building an altar to the Lord. By building the altar and offering sacrifices to the Lord, Noah was responding to the Lord's love and grace and delivering him from the judgment of the Flood by worshipping Him.

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures. It is the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Psalm 2:11-12, “Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”

Psalm 29:2b, “Worship the LORD in holy array.”

Matthew 4:10, “Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written, ‘YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.’”

John 4:23-24, “But an hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers, will worship the Father spiritually, yes, by means of truth. In fact, the Father intensely desires such

worshippers of Him. God, as to His nature, is spirit and those worshipping Him must worship spiritually, yes, by means of truth.'

Noah built the altar in order that he might sacrifice the clean animals, which portrayed the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

A "clean" animal is one that is acceptable to the Lord for sacrificial purposes.

The sacrifice of these clean animals "portrayed" the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18, 19

"knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers."

"but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

The killing of the innocent animal portrayed the fact that the impeccable human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was our "Substitute" meaning He died in our place. By offering this sacrifice to the Lord, Noah was looking forward in faith to the Cross whereas we in the church age look back at the Cross.

"**Burnt offerings**" is the noun *olah* (hl*u{) (o-law), which portrays "propitiation" with emphasis upon the Finished Work of Christ on the Cross.

"Propitiation" is the Godward side of salvation whereby the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God that the sins of the entire world-past, present and future be judged.

1 John 2:2, "Furthermore, He Himself is the propitiation with regards to our sins. In fact, He Himself is the propitiation not with regards to our sins only in contrast with the rest of unregenerate humanity, absolutely not, but also with regards to the entire world, without exception and without distinction."

1 John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The spiritual death of Christ is recorded in Matthew 27:45-46.

Matthew 27:45-46, "Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?' that is, 'MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?'"

Isaiah prophesied of the spiritual death of Christ in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 53:1-11

"Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

"For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him."

"He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him."

"Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted."

"But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed."

"All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him."

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

“By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?”

“His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with a rich man in His death, because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth.”

“But the LORD was pleased To crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.”

“As a result of the anguish of His soul, He will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”

“**Anguish of His soul**” refers to the intense suffering of our Lord’s human soul as a result of being separated from the Father on the Cross and which suffering no angel or man will ever be able to identify with since no angel or man has kept themselves experientially sinless.

The greatest suffering the humanity of Christ endured on the cross was “not” the physical and mental torture of the cross but rather when He received the imputation of the sins of the entire world by the justice of God the Father and was separated from the Father during the last 3 hours on the cross.

Our Lord’s loss of fellowship with His Father in His humanity during those last 3 hours in darkness on the Cross was infinitely more painful to our Lord than the physical suffering He had endured and was enduring.

Our Lord’s loss of fellowship with His Father in His humanity during those last 3 hours in darkness on the Cross was valued infinitely more by the Father than the shedding of His literal blood or His physical suffering. This is not to say that the Father did not value the physical suffering of His Son, or His literal blood, which was sinless, He did, but literal blood though sinless cannot resolve

man’s problem of separation from God under real spiritual death.

The separation from God of a perfect human being whose soul was never contaminated by sin was the penalty that had to be paid in order to redeem human souls from the curse of the first Adam’s sin of disobedience and real spiritual death. The anguish of the Son’s soul was valued much more than His blood since blood is inanimate but the human soul is created in the image of God.

Genesis 8:21

“The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.’”

“**Soothing aroma,**” indicates God’s satisfaction with the sacrifice of the clean animal, which portrayed the death of Christ and in particular that aspect of His finished work called “propitiation.” The Lord would “not” accept the animal sacrifice without obedience on the part of the offerer (Jer. 6:20; 7:21ff.). The Lord accepted Noah’s sacrifice and was pleased with it because Noah was obedient to Him.

Genesis 8:22

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

During the antediluvian period the entire earth was warm all year round, having no storms because of the vast transparent water vapor canopy that was above the earth’s atmosphere but when it precipitated during the flood of Noah, there became “**cold and heat, and summer and winter**” and the emergence of the North and South Poles.

Genesis 8:21-22 contains the first provision of a new covenant that the Lord is making with Noah. This covenant that the Lord made with Noah denoted His gracious undertaking for the benefit of Noah and his family and descendants as a result of Noah operating in faith and obeying the Lord by presenting the appropriate offerings on the altar. The covenant that God made with Noah was

“unconditional” meaning it totally and completely depended upon the faithfulness of God.

Genesis 9

Genesis 9:1-7 records God’s covenant with Noah. The first provision of this covenant is found in Genesis 8:20-22.

Genesis 8:20-22

“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.”

“The LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, ‘I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.’”

“While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”

The first provision stipulated that God would never again curse the earth on account of man and that day and night and seasons would never cease as long as the present earth remains and that there would be a continuation of humanity until the end of human history by guaranteeing its sustaining food supply.

Genesis 9:1

“And God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them

“Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”

The second provision stipulated that Noah and his descendants would multiply and replenish the earth. The command to be fruitful and multiply was also given to Adam as recorded in Genesis 1:28.

“**Blessed**” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) pronounced: bah-rach and means, “to bless,” in the sense that the Word of the Lord endued Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth with power to produce offspring in great numbers.

“**Be fruitful**” is the verb *parah* (hr*P*) (paw-raw) and means, “to be fruitful” in the sense of to reproduce.

“**Multiply**” is the verb *ravah* (hb*r*) (raw-vaw) and means, “to multiply, to increase” in number or quantity and denotes not only the concept of multiplication of one’s progeny but also sexual prosperity.

“**Fill**” is the verb *male* (al@m*) (mah-leh) and is used here of Noah and his sons being given the capacity to repopulate the earth.

In Genesis 1:28, Adam was commanded to have dominion over the earth but in Genesis 9:1, this is omitted since the earth has been brought under a curse because of Adam’s sin and as a result of this sin, Satan is the “**god of this world**” (2 Cor. 4:4) and “**ruler of this world**” (Jn. 16:11).

Genesis 9:2

“The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given.”

The third provision stipulated that Noah and his descendants would have dominion over the animal kingdom and implies that the interaction between humans and animals would not be peaceful, just as Genesis 9:6 suggests the same of human beings.

Genesis 9:3

“Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant.”

The fourth provision stipulated that all animal life was now given as food for people to eat and that the diet of the human race would not be restricted to a vegetable and fruit diet.

Genesis 9:4

“Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.”

The stipulation recorded in Genesis 9:4 was given since the soul life of animals resides in its blood (Lev. 17:11, 14). By forbidding the eating of the animal’s blood, this regulation instills a respect for the sacredness of life and protects against abuse (Lev. 3:17; 7:2-27; Deut. 12:1-24; 1 Sam. 14:32-34). The eating of meat is not a license to savagery meaning that even though Noah’s descendants are

predators at the top of the food chain, they must show a proper respect for life as a sacred thing.

Genesis 9:5

“Surely I will require your lifeblood; from every beast I will require it. And from every man, from every man's brother I will require the life of man.”

Genesis 9:6

“Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.”

Genesis 9:5-6 records for us the establishment of the fourth and final divine institution. These four institutions are systems of authority designed to protect the freedom of members of the human race, both unbeliever and the believer:

Volition: You have authority over your own soul (Gen. 2:16-17).

Marriage: Husband has authority over the wife (Gen. 2:22-24).

Family: Parents have authority over the children (Gen. 4:1).

Government: Government has authority over its citizens (Gen. 9:5-6).

Murder is a violation of the first divine institution, which is volition. The government has the responsibility to practice capital punishment in order to protect the freedom its citizens.

“I will require” is the verb *darash* (דָּרַשׁ) (daw-rash), which is a judicial term used with reference to both men and animals and expresses the fact God seeks “restitution” for murder by the execution of the murderer or the animal who has taken a human life.

The fifth provision stipulated that as a result of the total depravity of mankind, God instituted capital punishment in order to protect both animal and human life and to curb violence and be a deterrent to crime. The reason why this provision is given is found in the phrase **“for in the image of God, He (the Lord) made (‘asah, “modeled”)** (the soul of **man.”**

The emphasis of this stipulation recorded in Genesis 9:5-6 does “not” refer to vengeance but

rather justice and the careful recognition of the sacredness of the divine image in man, though marred by sin. Murder is a shocking affront to God and a terrible crime against one’s fellow man.

Before the Flood the lack of capital punishment led to blood vendettas (Gen. 4) and without instinctive fear, the animals corrupted their behavior.

Genesis 9:5-6 records the institution of human government where God delegated authority to mankind as His agents in exacting retribution by capital punishment upon those who take a human life indicating as well that this is not a personal matter but a social obligation. Before the Flood, there was no formal arrangement of human government and thus no formal punishment of crime or of crime prevention, even for the capital crime of murder, as evident in the individual histories of Cain and Lamech. The absence of human government and the total depravity of mankind led to a universal state of violence and anarchy, which resulted in the judgment of the Flood. God established capital punishment and thereby human government in order to prevent the conditions of the antediluvian period from developing again.

Numbers 35:30-34, Deuteronomy 17:6-7 and 19:15 teach that capital punishment “cannot” take place unless there are two or more witnesses to the crime and that they all agree in their testimony after being individually and separately interviewed.

Capital punishment is taught in the Old Testament (Ex. 21:12, 15-17; 22:2, 18-20; Num. 35:6-34; Deut. 19:1-13; 24:7) and in the New Testament (Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13).

The fact that capital punishment was instituted does “not” mean that there is never to be an exception to the punishment of execution for the crime of murder. With God, justice may be tempered with mercy, in response to repentance.

For example, David was guilty of the capital crimes of murder and adultery in the case of Uriah and Bathsheba respectively and God forgave David when he confessed his sin and thus David instead of dying by stoning or the sword as he

deserved, **“died in a good old age, full of days, riches and honor”** (1 Chron. 29:28).

Also, the woman caught in the act of adultery was guilty by the Mosaic Law of a crime punishable by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) and the Lord Jesus seeing her heart of repentance, was moved to forgive her and to see that she was set free (Jn. 8:3-11).

In like manner, a judge or a governor is warranted in taking such mitigating factors as may exist in a given situation into consideration in determining a sentence, legal penalty of capital punishment.

The essential point is that man was delegated authority and responsibility of human government by God and that this responsibility first entails the recognition of the sacredness of human life and that man is created in the image of God and the recognition of capital punishment as the just and legal penalty for murder. It is clear that the authority for capital punishment implies also the authority to establish laws governing human activities and personal relationships, which if unregulated would lead to murder, robbery, adultery, thus this instruction to Noah is the fundamental basis for all human legal and governmental institutions.

Genesis 9:7

“As for you, be fruitful and multiply; Populate the earth abundantly and multiply in it.”

Genesis 9:7 is a repetition of Genesis 9:1 in order to emphasize God’s desire to have many people who will gather around His throne and enjoy fellowship with Him throughout eternity (Rev. 5:9-10).

Genesis 9:8-17 records the establishment and sign of the Noahic covenant.

Genesis 9:8-9

“Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, ‘Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you.’”

Genesis 9:10

“and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle (*b^ehemah* “domestic animals”), and every beast (*chayyah* “wild

animals”) of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth.”

Genesis 9:11

“I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off (niphil form of *karath* “to destroy”) by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth.”

“Covenant” is the noun *b^erith* (tyr!B+), which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other’s behalf.

This covenant that God made with Noah was the result of Noah operating in faith and obeying the Lord by presenting the appropriate offerings on the altar and denoted God’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Noah and his family and descendants and the animal kingdom to never again destroy the earth with a worldwide flood.

The covenant confirms God’s preexisting relationship with all His creatures when He blessed them at the time of their creation. It also affirms God’s passionate concern for and certain commitment to the preservation and care for all of His creatures in the air, on the land and in the sea. The repetition of the fact God established the covenant gives emphasis to it.

Genesis 9:12-15

“God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations.’”

“I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth.”

“It shall come about, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow will 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 never again shall the water become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

“I will remember” is the verb *zakhar* (rk^z*) (zaw-kar), which signifies that whenever the

rainbow appears in the sky, God will act upon His promise He made to Noah to never destroy the earth again with a worldwide flood and by acting on this promise, God would demonstrate Himself to be a trustworthy partner.

The phrase **“I will remember”** is an “anthropopathism” where the human attribute of remembering is ascribed to God who is omniscient in order to appeal to our human frame of reference and to teach us about God’s concern and involvement in the affairs of men.

The phrase **“I will remember”** also speaks of the “immanency” of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with the affairs of men.

Genesis 9:16

“When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”

This statement stands in stark contrast with God’s statement in Genesis 6:12 where He looked upon the earth’s inhabitants and saw them corrupt. But in Genesis 9:16 we see the awesome transcendent God humbling Himself to involve Himself with the affairs of men and mercifully choosing to reflect on the rainbow rather than the evil and sin produced by fallen humanity.

The expression **“the everlasting covenant”** indicates that this promise to Noah would “expire” when the present heavens and earth are destroyed at the end of human history.

Genesis 9:17

“And God said to Noah, ‘This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.’”

Genesis 9:12-17 records that the Noahic covenant would be marked by a “sign,” namely, a rainbow.

Four Covenants marked by a “sign”: (1) Noahic: Rainbow (Gen. 9:12-17) (2) Abrahamic: Circumcision (Gen. 17:11) (3) Mosaic: Sabbath (Ex. 31:13, 17)(4) Davidic: Son (Isa. 7:14).

The rainbow should be a reminder to us that we can trust God to be faithful to His promises and we can look to Him also for mercy and grace.

Deuteronomy 7:9, “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

Psalms 145:8, “The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.”

The rainbow typifies the cross of Christ in the sense that just as the judgment of the Flood was never again to be repeated so the believer would never be judged for his sins since Christ died for every sin-past, present and future.

1 John 2:12, “I am providing information in writing at this particular time for the benefit of all of you, little children in view of the fact that for the benefit of all of you, your sins have been forgiven-past, present and future on the basis of His merit.”

In order that mankind would not have to live in constant fear of another worldwide flood, God gave a reminder that He would never again destroy the earth in this manner.

Just as the rainbow was a sign or symbol of God’s mercy to the entire human race so the cross of Christ manifests the mercy of God towards the entire human race. The rainbow also demonstrates the grace of God where in wrath, God remembers mercy, glory follows suffering and where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

Grace is the exercise of all the divine attributes and is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross.

Ephesians 2:8, 9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

“not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Grace is for the unworthy and undeserving and manifests itself through acts of mercy and compassion.

Psalm 116:5, “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”

The Lord Jesus Christ is the grace of God incarnate (2 Cor. 8:9).

2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

The rainbow appears three more times in Scripture. In Ezekiel 1:28 the rainbow is seen surrounding the throne of God as He prepares to judge His people Israel. It is seen again around the throne of God just prior to Great Tribulation in Revelation 4:3.

Revelation 4:3, “And He who was sitting was like a jasper stone and a sardius in appearance; and there was a rainbow around the throne, like an emerald in appearance.”

The rainbow appears one last time in Revelation 10:1 where it is over the head of an elect angel who appears during the midway point of the Tribulation. In each of these cases, the picture is one of immanent judgment and suffering, but only “limited” judgment and suffering, with God’s grace ruling over all.

Genesis 9:18-23 records the incident that reminds us of the fallen nature that resides not only in unbelievers but also in great believers such as Noah who got drunk by drinking in excess the wine he produced from his vineyard.

Genesis 9:18

“Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth; and Ham was the father of Canaan.”

Genesis 9:19

“These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.”

The Bible is very explicit and emphatic that men living in the world and all its various races are descended from Noah through his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth (see Genesis 10:32; Acts 17:26). All the physical characteristics of the different nations and races must therefore, have been present in the genetic constitutions of these six people who came through the Flood in the Ark.

Somehow, by the regular mechanisms of genetics-variation, recombination-all the various groups of nations and races must have developed from this beginning.

Genesis 9:20

“Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard.”

Noah is the first recorded vineyard planter in the Bible and the Ark landed in the area of Armenia, which in the ancient world was famous for its vineyards (Xenophon, Anabasis 4.4.9).

Genesis 9:21

“He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.”

“**Wine**” is the noun *yayin* (/y!y^/) (yah-yin), which is the usual Hebrew word for a fermented grape and clearly refers to an intoxicated beverage when used in excess.

Winemaking begins when the grapes are harvested in August and September where workers cut off the clusters with special knives and collect them in baskets. Sometimes the grapes are left in the sun as much as two weeks in order to increase the sugar content, but most often they are dumped immediately into the winepress.

A winepress consisted of two round or rectangular basins, carved from rock or dug in the ground, then sealed with pitch. The larger basin where the grapes were actually squeezed might measure 75 square feet, with a depth of 8 to 12 inches. It would be deeper on one end where a trough allowed the juice to pour into a smaller catch basin, perhaps three feet or more deep.

Barefoot men would tread the grapes (Isa. 16:10; Jer. 48:33) or large stones would be used to weigh them down. Sometimes the workers would use a pressing beam, which is a beam of wood with one end inserted in the rim of the basin and a large round stone tied on the other end, so that a lever action could be used to press down on the grapes.

Once the juice had drained into the catch basin, it was transferred to earthenware pots (Jer. 13:12) or wineskins made from goat or lamb skins (Josh. 9:4, 13).

Fermentation would begin within six to twelve hours and after fermentation was completed the wine was not to be left in the original containers with the lees, or residue at the bottom. It was poured or siphoned through a cloth filter into a permanent storage vessel.

Wine jugs were often labeled with the kind of wine or the place of origin. The Arabs invented distillation during the Middle Ages, thus Old Testament wine was not fortified with extra alcohol.

In natural wines, the percentage of alcohol is limited to half of the percentage of the sugar in the juice and when alcohol content reaches more than 10-11 percent, it kills the yeast cells, so that fermentation ceases. Ancient wines were probably 7-10 percent alcohol, which is still enough to cause drunkenness as in the case of Noah.

Wine is often linked with pleasure in the Old Testament (Psa. 104:15; Ecc. 10:19) and was a normal part of feasts as well as being used as a drink offering when worshipping the Lord (Ex. 29:40; Lev. 23:13; Num. 15:5, 7, 10; 28:14).

Wine could be used by Israel when rejoicing before the Lord in connection with the feasts of Israel (Deut. 14:26) and our Lord's first miracle was related to wine where in Cana He turned water into wine (Jn. 2:1-12).

A number of passages warn against the dangers of drunkenness since it causes people to stagger (Ps. 107:27; Prov. 23:34), it makes them sick (Is. 28:8; Jer. 25:27), it makes the eyes red (Prov. 23:29), it puts a person into a stupor (Jer. 51:39, 57), it makes a person poor (Prov. 23:21), it interferes with a leader's work (Prov. 31:4f).

Proverbs 23:29-35

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?"

"Those who linger long over wine, those who go to taste mixed wine."

"Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly."

"At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like a viper."

"Your eyes will see strange things and your mind will utter perverse things."

"And you will be like one who lies down in the middle of the sea, or like one who lies down on the top of a mast."

"They struck me, but I did not become ill; They beat me, but I did not know it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink."

The foolishness of drunkenness is shown by the examples of Noah (Gen. 9:21), Lot (Gen. 19:31-38), Nabal (1 Sam. 25:36-39), David (2 Sam. 11:13), Absalom (2 Sam. 13:28) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:2).

The Bible does "not" prohibit drinking alcohol but it "does" prohibit drunkenness.

Ephesians 5:18, "And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit."

Believers are not to associate with believers who are drunks (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Drunkenness is a manifestation of the old Adamic sin nature (Gal. 5:19-21).

Genesis 9:21

"He drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent."

"**Uncovered himself**" is the hithpael (reflexive stem) form of the verb *galah* (hl*G*) (gaw-law), which indicates that Noah undressed himself, thus refuting those who claim that Cain unclothed Noah and had homosexual relations with Noah.

Genesis 9:22

"Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside."

The phrase "**saw the nakedness of his father**" does "not" mean that Ham was involved with Noah sexually since Noah was naked already and if he was involved sexually with Noah the Hebrew would have had the hiphil (causative) stem of *galah* and be translated "he (Ham) uncovered his father's nakedness."

In the ancient world, seeing one's father naked was a breach of family ethic and the sanctity of the family was destroyed and the strength of the father was made a mockery.

Ham's response to his father's nakedness was one of rebellion and "not" one of respect for his father but rather disrespect since he went and told his brothers rather than covering his father as his brothers Shem and Japheth would later do.

Evidently, Ham had a long hidden resentment of his father's authority and character and integrity and apparently, he had a rebellious side to his nature, which is manifested by his treatment of his father.

1 Samuel 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry."

Ham did not honor his father whereas his brothers did.

Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."

When Ham saw his father drunk and asleep naked, he told his two brothers about the news instead of covering his father up and his father's failure.

1 Peter 4:8, "Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."

Ham's actions not only revealed resentment and rebellion towards his father but also, more importantly, it revealed his resentment toward God, which was a character trait that manifested itself in his descendants.

Ham's descendants, the Canaanites, developed into seven nations in Canaan (Deut. 7:1) and were idolatrous (Deut. 29:17), involved in the occult (Deut. 18:9-10) and gross immorality (Lev. 18), which archaeology confirms.

Genesis 9:23

"But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were turned away, so that they did not see their father's nakedness."

Shem and Japheth honor their father and love him, which is demonstrated by taking a garment and laying it upon their shoulders and walking backward and with their faces turned away, they covered their father's nakedness. They did "not" rebuke Ham verbally but rather their actions served as a much stronger rebuke.

Genesis 9:24-27 records Noah's prophecies concerning the descendants of his three sons, which foreshadow Israel's history and that of world history, and which prophecies were in response to the actions of his three sons in dealing with his drunkenness and nakedness.

Genesis 9:24

"When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him."

The phrase "**his youngest son**" is a poor translation and does "not" refer to Ham's youngest son Canaan (Gen. 10:6) but rather to Noah's "younger" son Ham since Genesis 9:22 clearly teaches that Ham and not his youngest son Canaan had saw Noah drunk and naked in his tent.

"**Youngest**" is the adjective *qatan* (/f*Q*) (kaw-tawn), which should be translated "younger" since Ham was "not" the youngest but rather Japheth since in the Bible, the names of children are listed in the order in which they were born.

In the book of Genesis and 1 Chronicles 1-2, the names of children are listed in the order in which they were born, thus, the phrase "**Shem, Ham and Japheth**" appears in Genesis 5:32, 6:10, 7:13, 9:18, 10:1 and 1 Chronicles 1:4, indicating that Shem was the oldest followed by Ham and then Japheth as the youngest. The fact that Shem is the older brother of Japheth is confirmed in Genesis 10:21.

The fact that the names of children are listed in the order in which they were born would indicate that "**Canaan**" was the "youngest" son of Ham according to Genesis 10:6.

The fact that the names of Ham's sons were listed in the order in which they were born would indicate clearly that Ham was "not" the youngest of Noah's three sons since in Genesis 5:32, 6:10, 7:13, 9:18, 10:1 and 1 Chronicles 1:4 all list Ham as the second son of Noah. Therefore, it would be

a completely inconsistent interpretation to place Canaan as the youngest son of Ham and to “not” place Japheth as the youngest son of Noah with Ham in the middle and Shem as the oldest.

Genesis 9:25

“So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.’”

“**Cursed**” is the passive form of the verb *ʾarar* (רָרָא) (aw-rar), which is a declaration of punishment upon Ham’s youngest son Canaan’s descendants as a result of Ham’s disobedience.

The descendants of Canaan are listed in Genesis 10:15-20 and 1 Chronicles 1:13-16.

“**His brothers**” is a reference to the descendants of Shem as indicated by the phrase “**let Canaan be his (Shem’s) servant**” in Genesis 9:26 and is also a reference to the descendants of Japheth as indicated by the phrase “**let Canaan be his (Japheth’s) servant**” in Genesis 9:27.

The descendants of Shem are recorded in Genesis 10:22-31, and 1 Chronicles 1:17-27 whereas the descendants of Japheth are recorded in Genesis 10:2-5 and 1 Chronicles 1:5-7.

Genesis 9:25 is a revelation of the decree of God, which is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future of the descendants of Canaan who were the descendants of Noah’s youngest son Ham. This decree is simply a declaration of God’s sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future concerning Canaan’s descendants.

Noah does “not” pronounce a curse upon Ham but rather his youngest son Canaan since it would be Canaan’s descendants, the Canaanites who according to the Bible were idolatrous and involved in gross immorality and the occult.

Noah was “not” punishing Ham’s youngest son Canaan for what Ham did but rather simply issuing a prophecy concerning the nation of Canaanites that would come from Ham through Canaan.

The Canaanites would not suffer the curse and the bondage because of the sins of Ham but rather because of their own sins.

God was simply looking down the corridors of time and in His omniscience saw what would take place in the future in regards to the descendants of Canaan and the through Noah, the Holy Spirit revealed this to Noah’s sons.

The phrase “**servant of servants he shall be to his brothers**” refers to universal or worldwide servitude since Noah predicted that Canaan would be both a “servant” to Shem and Japheth meaning that the Canaanites would be servants to not only one nation or one other group of nations but to “all” other nations.

Remember, all the nations existing today descended from Noah’s three sons, therefore, when Noah says that Canaan would serve his brothers, he means that their servitude would be universal. The Jews originate from Shem, and one branch of the Gentiles (non-Jews) originates from Japheth and another from Ham.

The nations that originate from Shem include the Jews, Arabs, Syrians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, etc. The nations that originate from Japheth include the nations of Greece, Rome, the great nations of Europe, and later America as well as the great Asian nations throughout history. The nations that originate from Ham include the Egyptians, Sumerians, and Phoenicians, the great Africa nations such as Ethiopia as well as the Hittites and Canaanites.

Genesis 9:25-27 was written on behalf of Israel and the history of the Canaanites would be of great interest to Israel since the Lord had promised Israel the land of the Canaanites.

The enslavement of the Canaanites took place early on in the days of Abraham according to Genesis 14 where the Canaanites were enslaved by the eastern kings.

The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). The Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19). Therefore, Genesis 9:24-29 sets the stage or lays the foundation for Israel’s foreign policy in the land (Deut. 20:16-18).

Now, we must remember that this curse upon Canaan was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it. An example is Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite and placed her faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ and after a period of purification, was brought into Israel's society.

Genesis 9:26

“He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, The God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.’”

“**Blessed**” is the passive voice of the verb *barakh* (lr^B*) (bah-rach), which is used to praise the Lord for the covenant relationship that He decreed would take place between the descendants of Shem (namely, Israel who is descended from Shem) and Himself.

The prophecy of Genesis 9:26 would be of great interest to Israel to whom Moses wrote the book of Genesis since Israel descended from Shem and it would be an encouragement to Israel to trust the promise of God that He would give them the land of Canaan.

The nation of Israel originates from Noah's oldest son, Shem according to a comparison of the genealogies listed in Genesis 10 and 1 Chronicles 1:1-2:8. 1 Chronicles 1:5-7 lists the descendants of Japheth and then 1 Chronicles 1:8-16 lists the descendants of Ham and lastly 1 Chronicles 1:17-27 lists the descendants of Shem up to Abraham and then only the line of Shem continues forward. 1 Chronicles 1:28 records that Abraham had two sons Isaac and Ishmael and 1 Chronicles 1:34 records that Isaac had a son called Israel who is also known as Jacob and 1 Chronicles 2:1-2 records the twelve sons of Israel from whom the nation of Israel originates.

This prophecy was fulfilled when the Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield by Israel under Joshua and were thus destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19).

In Genesis 9:26, the covenant name of God is used by Moses, which is *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” since this prophecy concerning the descendants of Shem would be directly related to the Palestinian covenant that the Lord made with Israel that

stipulated that He would give to Israel the land of Canaan.

The Palestinian covenant was “unconditional” meaning it depended upon the Lord's faithfulness to Israel who promised land to them, which will be literally fulfilled during the millennial reign of Christ (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18; 26:3-4; 35:12; Ex. 6:2-8; Num. 34:1-2; Deut. 30:1-9; Josh. 1:2-4). The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

In Genesis 9:26, the covenant name of God is used by Moses, which is *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” since this prophecy indicates that the descendants of Shem would have a covenant relationship with the Triune God through faith and that the Messiah-Savior in His human nature who is Jesus Christ, would be a descendant of Shem. Therefore, the prophecy of Genesis 9:26 expands upon the prophecy of Genesis 3:15, giving us more information regarding the promised “Seed” (Jesus Christ) and in particular that in His human nature He would come through the line of Shem, which is recorded in Luke 4:23-38.

This prophecy in Genesis 9:26 is the first indication that God is electing the line of Shem to rule the earth, which was God's original purpose for man according to Genesis 1:26-28 and that the line of Shem would produce the promised “Seed” and fulfill the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 to crush the head of the serpent, Satan.

Genesis 9:27

“May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”

Notice that Moses does “not” use the covenant name of God *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” but rather he uses *Elohim*, “**God**,” which refers to the sovereignty of God over human history implying that there is no creature or thing that will be able to prevent this prophecy concerning the Japhethites from being fulfilled.

In Genesis 9:27, the verb *pathah*, “**enlarge**” and the proper noun *yepheth*, “**Japheth**” is a paronomasia referring to the fact that the Japhethites would be enlarged spiritually or be made spiritually prosperous because they would

share in the blessings of the Shemites from whom the Messiah would originate. It does “not” refer to a geographical enlargement since both the Shemites and Hamites have spread geographically as far as the Japhethites.

“**He** (descendants of Japheth) **will dwell in the tents of Shem**” implies that the descendants of Japheth (Gentiles) would share in the blessings of Shem meaning that they would share in the blessings bestowed upon Israel because the Messiah would come from her.

After the Lord Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and was seated at the right hand of the Father, ten days later, on the day of Pentecost, regenerate Israel received the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 2) and received every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (Eph. 1:3-14).

The Japhethites or who Gentiles displaced Israel when Peter followed by Paul turned from unregenerate Israel to the Gentiles who like the regenerate Jews received the baptism of the Spirit (Acts 10; 13:44-52; 14:27; 18:6) and they too received every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

In Ephesians 2:11-22, the apostle Paul explains that the Holy Spirit is building a spiritual temple, which is the church and it is composed of both Jew and Gentile races.

Spiritual displacement is in view here in Genesis 9:27, thus, today the heirs of Abraham’s covenants are mostly Gentiles. This is illustrated by Paul’s metaphor in Romans 11:17.

Romans 11:17, “But if some of the branches were broken off (unsaved Israel), and you, being a wild olive (Gentiles), were grafted in (saved through faith in Christ) among them (born again Israel) and became partaker with them (born again Israel) of the rich root (Christ) of the olive tree (Israel).”

Apart from the preservation of an elect remnant within racial or ethnic Israel, ethnic or racial divisions or distinctions no longer exist during the church age according to 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:26-28. The church includes the Ethiopian eunuch (Ham) (Acts 8:25-40), Peter

(Mt. 16) and Paul (Shem) (Acts 9) and Cornelius (Japheth) (Acts 10).

God is no respecter of a person’s ethnic origin but only of his or her spiritual condition and in God’s household, there is none who is unclean (Acts 10) and in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile for all are Abraham’s seed through faith in Christ (Gal. 3:26-29).

Genesis 9:28-29 records Noah’s epitaph.

Genesis 9:28

“Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood.”

Genesis 9:29

“So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years, and he died.”

Noah lived longer than any of his ancestors with the exception of Jared who died at the age of 962 years old and Methuselah who died at the age of 969 years old. The genealogical record of Noah begun in Genesis 6:9 is completed here in Genesis 9:29.

Genesis 10

The genealogy that appears in Genesis 10 is called by theologians call, “the Table of nations.” The “Table” represents God’s concern for all people and all nations and not just Israel, which is understood by the omission of Israel from this “Table” and emphasizes that God, is the God of the Gentiles by omitting Israel. The Table of Nations was written for the benefit of Israel who according to the Word of God would be the medium to bring blessing to the world. It was necessary for Israel to understand the source from which the various nations that surrounded her originated in order that she might have an insight into their character by which to guide her attitude and conduct toward them. The Table of Nations presents a background of world history for the call of Abraham and in fact, out of concern for the salvation of the nations, God calls Abraham and his posterity.

The genealogy of Genesis 10 is “segmented” meaning it displays depth and breadth of the relations between the nations tracing their lineage

back to a common ancestor, namely, Noah's three sons.

The Table of Nations genealogy expresses the kinship and distinctions between Israel and the nations where she emerges from them and is destined to bring blessing to them through the Messiah.

The Table of Nations genealogy is "linear" meaning it establishes continuity over stretches of time without narrative to demonstrate the legitimacy of Noah's son Shem as the one whom the promised "Seed" Jesus Christ will come.

Seventy nations are presented in the Table of Nations: Fourteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-six from Shem.

The Table of Nations is "selective" and "not exhaustive" since it is arranged to give most attention to those nations with whom the nation of Israel would have most contact. Thus, the descendants of Japheth are given in Genesis 10:2-5 followed by the descendants of Ham are given with special attention to the Canaanites in Genesis 10:6-20 and lastly, the descendants of Shem are given in Genesis 10:21-31, which includes the Israelites.

Each section concludes with a formula summarizing the preceding narrative in terms of "**families**" (genealogy), "**languages**" (linguistics), "**lands**" (territories), and "**nations**" (politics).

The Bible is very explicit and emphatic that men living in the world and all its various races are descended from Noah through his three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth (see Genesis 10:32; Acts 17:26). All the physical characteristics of the different nations and races must therefore, have been present in the genetic constitutions of these six people who came through the Flood in the Ark.

Somehow, by the regular mechanisms of genetics-variation, recombination-all the various groups of nations and races must have developed from this beginning.

History records that the descendants of Japheth settled to the north and west whereas Ham went south after the Flood and Shem traveled east.

Genesis 10:1

"Now these are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah; and sons were born to them after the flood."

"These are the records of the generations of Shem, Ham and Japheth, the sons of Noah" refers to the genealogy that follows in Genesis 10 and this is indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toled-aw) (tw{dl@w{T), "**the records of the generations**" which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

Genesis 10:1 is the introduction or preamble to Genesis 10 and contains two parts: (1) Scope of the genealogy: Noah and the descendants of his three sons (2) Identifies chronological context: "**After the Flood.**"

Genesis 10:2

"The sons of Japheth ("enlarged") were Gomer (go-mer-name means "completion") **and Magog** (ma-gog-"land of God") **and Madai** ("middle land") **and Javan** (ja-van) ("one in a state of bubbling heat") **and Tubal** (tu-bal) ("You shall be led") **and Meshech** (me-shek) ("led along") **and Tiras** (ti-ras) ("expulsion, disinherit, impoverish")."

Herodotus and Plutarch identify "**Gomer**" with the district of Cimmeria, which is north of the Black Sea. The Cimmerians were nomadic herdsmen and were distinguished for their archery according to Babylonian texts of the 6th century B.C.

Late in the 2nd millennium B.C. the Scythians drove them from their homeland north of the Caucasus into those mountains into the Crimea when their attempted expansion into China was thwarted.

The Scythians pushed the Cimmerians across the Caucasus and into Armenia, Anatolia and Eastern Europe.

The descendants of "**Gomer**" include: Celts, Galatians, Ostrogoths, Visigoths, Goths, Vandals, Scandinavians, Armenians, Germans, Belgians, Dutch, Austrians, Swiss, Angles, Saxons, Britons, English, Cornish, Irish, Welsh, French.

"Magog" and his descendants inhabited exclusively the region of the Caucasus and of northern Armenia and Josephus says that Magog "founded those that from him were named

Magogites but who by the Greeks were called Scythians.”

The Scythians themselves have a tradition that their ancestors originally came forth from Armenia and this agrees with the Scriptures, which places the immediate descendants of Noah in Armenia.

The Japhetic race comprised those whom the Greeks and Romans called Sarmatians, but who in modern times are called Slavs or Russians.

The descendants of “**Magog**” include: (Russians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Finns, Siberians, Yugoslavians, Croatians, Bosnians, Serbians, Slovenians, Slovakians, Bulgarians, Poles, Czechs.

According to 2 Kings 17:6, 18:11; Isaiah 21:2, Jeremiah 51:11 and Daniel 5:28, “**Madai**” refers to the land of Media and its people who were called “Medes” who settled in ancient “Persia” or what is now called “Iran.” They settled in the mountainous region east of Assyria and south of the Caspian Sea and both Herodotus and Strabo confirm the fact that they were of Indo-European (that is Japhetic) extract and we know that their language was of this group. It was through this group that the Aryans developed who later migrated into India to become the progenitors of the Indian peoples.

The Medes were absorbed by the Persian Empire during the reign of Cyrus and were a hostile power to Babylon according to Isaiah 13:17 and 21:2. The descendants of “**Madai**” include: Medes, Aryans, Persians, Iranians, Kurds, Turks, East Indians, the peoples of Afghanistan, Pakistan.

The Hebrew noun *yavan* (/w*y*) (yaw-vawn') is translated “**Javan**” in some Old Testament passages (Ezek. 27:13; Isa. 66:19), “Greece” in others (Dan. 8:21; Zech. 9:13) and thus, represents the Greeks and in particular the Asiatic Ionians of the coast of Caria and Lydia whose cities were important commercial emporiums two centuries before those of the Peloponnesus.

The descendants of “**Javan**” include: Greeks, Spartans, Dorians, Britons, Aeolians, Achaeans, Myceneans, Macedonians, Carthaginians, Cyprians, Cretans, Latins, Venetians, Romans, Sicilians, Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese.

“**Meshech**” and “**Tubal**” migrated from Asia and later from Asia Minor to the north beyond the Black Sea, the Taurus Mountains (located directly north of Turkey and along the eastern border of Russia) and Caspian Seas (located directly north or Tehran, Iran and along southern border of Russia) and were known as wild barbarians.

Ezekiel identifies “**Magog, Meshech**” and “**Tubal**” as being located far north of Israel, which today is Russia and its republics and prophesied that during the midway point of the Tribulation period these three nations will invade Israel but will be totally destroyed supernaturally by God (Ezek. 38). The descendants of “**Meshech**” include: Muscovites, Lithuanians, Romanians whereas the descendants of “**Tubal**” include: Georgians and Albanians.

Josephus contended that “**Tiras**” was the founder of the Thracians and the Jerusalem Targum agrees and according to Herodotus (Greek historian 484-425 B.C.) the Etruscans migrated to Lydia in Asia Minor and then went west to Sicily and Italy, which had begun about 1000 B.C. was largely complete by the 8th century B.C. The descendants of “**Tiras**” include: Scandinavians, Vikings, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes and the people of Iceland.

Genesis 10:3

“**The sons of Gomer were Ashkenaz and Riphath and Togarmah.**”

The descendants of “**Ashkenaz**” settled originally in what is now Armenia but in later Jewish traditions he was associated with his father Gomer with the Germanic races. Hence, Germanic Jews are still known as “Ashkenazi,” and which name as some ethnologists contend has also been preserved under the names “Scandia” and “Saxon,” as colonists from Germany made their way into Denmark and its northern islands and to the western shores of the continent.

Therefore, the descendants of “**Ashkenaz**” formed a large component of the earliest settlers of Germany and Scandinavia.

The descendants of “**Riphath**” gave their name to the Riphæan Mountains, which early cosmographers thought of as constituting the then

northern boundary of the world and settled in Czechoslovakia, Romania and Turkey.

The people named after **“Togarmah,”** another son of Gomer, are mentioned twice in Ezekiel (Ezek. 27:14; 38:6) and Josephus says that **“Togarmah”** is the father of the people known as Thrugrammeans, whom the Greeks identified with the Phrygians.

According to the Jewish Targums, **“Togarmah”** was the father of Germany and there are some who believe that the word “Germania” itself is formed out of the older name **“Togarmah”**, with the first syllable lost in the process.

Genesis 10:4

“The sons of Javan were Elishah (e-li’sha) (“my God is disregarded”) **and Tarshish** (tar’shish) (“she will cause poverty, she will scatter”), **Kittim** (kit’im) (“bruisers”) **and Dodanim** (dod’a-nim) (“leaders”).”

As we noted in our study of **“Javan”** who was the fourth son of Japheth, **“Javan”** represented the Ionian Greeks and if so then **“Elishah”** is related to the Greeks.

The name “Hellas” is a form of “Elishah,” which came to be applied to Greece as a whole (note Hellespont, Hellenists, etc.) and Homer in his work the “Iliad” mentions the Eilesian people.

“Elishah” was the father of the Aeolian Greeks and is associated with Cyprus since it is mentioned in a number of cuneiform records (ca. 1800 to 1300 B.C.).

“Tarshish” appears frequently in the Old Testament representing a Phoenician copper-smelting center either in “Sardinia” or in “Tartessus” in southern Spain near Gibraltar.

“Kittim” also appears frequently in the Old Testament referring to those who dwelt on the east coast of Cyprus.

“Dodanim” is the collective name of the people descended from Dodan, who were known to the Greeks as the Donlani, the Dardanians of Asia Minor and settled initially around the area of Troy, whose coastal regions are known to this day as the Dardanelles.

A study of Genesis 10:1-4 reveals that Japheth descendants multiplied in the course of time and populated the northern shore of the Mediterranean, the whole of Europe, the British Isles and Scandinavia, and the larger part of Russia. One major branch of the Japhethites headed eastward into Persia and India. Therefore, the Japhetic people are, in general, the peoples of India and Europe or what demographers call, “Indo-European stock.”

Genesis 10:5

“From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.”

The term “Gentiles” meaning non-Jewish racially was especially designated to the descendants of Japheth since the Hebrew noun *goy* (YW{G}) is applied to them in Genesis 10:5 but not to the descendants of “Ham” in Genesis 10:20 or “Shem” of course in Genesis 10:31 since the Jews originate from Shem.

Genesis 10:5 clearly refers to the aftermath of the Tower of Babel since it mentions the descendants of Japheth as being **“separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations”** whereas prior to the Tower of Babel the earth’s inhabitants had the same language, having a one world government headed up by Nimrod.

In Genesis 10:6-12, we have the record of the descendants of Ham and in particular Ham’s most famous or should I say “infamous” son, namely, Nimrod.

The earliest imperial world power originated from the Hamitic line, that being Babylon under Nimrod and later in such capitals of empire as Asshur and Nineveh on the Tigris River and Egypt on the Nile.

Genesis 10:6

“The sons of Ham (“hot, burnt, dark, warm, passionate”) **were Cush** (“black”) **and Mizraim** (miz’ra-im) (“double straits”) **and Put** (“a bow”) **and Canaan** (“belonging to the land of red purple”).”

The descendants of “**Cush**” were originally connected to Babylonia since it was equated with ancient city-kingdom of Kish in lower Babylonia where emperors of the 3rd millennium B.C. to their title as “kings of the world” (W.F. Albright, “Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands,” in Young’s Analytical Concordance, page 32, cited by Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, page 48).

The descendants of “**Cush**” include: Ethiopians, Sudanese, Africans, Bushmen, Pygmies, Australian Aborigines and New Guineans.

“**Mizraim**” is the ancestor of the ancient Egyptians and is the customary name for Egypt in the Bible, which is also called “**the land of Ham**” in Psalm 104:23, suggesting that Ham accompanied his son Mizraim in the original settlement of the Nile Valley (see Psalm 78:51).

The inscriptions of the Persian king Darius I the Great (522-486 B.C.) state that “**Put**” is located in Cyrenaica in North Africa, west of Egypt, which would put in modern day Libya and Josephus confirms this identification. The descendants of “**Put**” include: Libyans, Tunisians, Somalians and North Africans.

“**Canaan**” is the grandson of Noah who was cursed by his grandfather and his descendants were called the “Canaanites” who lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51). The descendants of “**Canaan**” include: Mongols, Chinese, Japanese, Asians, Malaysians, American Indians, Eskimos, Polynesians, Pacific Islanders.

Genesis 10:7, “The sons of Cush were Seba (“drink up”) and Havilah (“anguish, pain”) and Sabtah (sab’ta) (“he compassed the mark”) and Raamah (“thunder”) and Sabteca (sab’te-ka) (“striking”); and the sons of Raamah were Sheba (“seven or an oath”) and Dedan (de’dan) (“low country”).”

“**Seba**” founded the nation that was known to later history as the Sabaeans who lived in Southern Arabia in the region of Yemen and across the Red Sea in Ethiopia.

“**Havilah**” is the progenitor of the Hamitic tribe of Havilah, his descendants settled on the east coast of Arabia overlooking the Persian Gulf.

The descendants of “**Sabtah**” settled on the eastern side of the Arabian Peninsula.

“**Raamah**” settled in southern Arabia and is specifically mentioned as the father of “**Sheba**” and “**Dedan**” and he is the only one of the sons of Cush whose own sons’ names are listed since they were famous in their day, which is reflected in the fact that two of Abraham’s grandsons through Keturah were apparently named after them.

“**Sabteca**” appeared to have settled in south Arabia, which is today called “Yemen” and this indicated by Josephus who called them the “Sabactens.”

“**Sheba**” was in southwest Arabia in what is now part of Yemen and was once famed as the Land of Spices whose land was extremely fertile, being watered by ingenious irrigation systems that were controlled by a vast dam that once spanned the river Adhanat.

“**Dedan**” were also located in Arabia near Edom according to Isaiah 21:13, Jeremiah 25:23, 49:8 and Ezekiel 25:13 and were associated with “**Sheba**” since they were trade partners with Tyre (Ezek. 27:15, 20; 38:13).

Genesis 10:8, “Now Cush became the father of Nimrod (“rebel”); he became a mighty one on the earth.”

“**Nimrod**” is the proper noun *nimrodh* (dr)m=n!) (nim-rode), which means, “rebel” and comes from the verb *maradh* (dr^m*) (maw-rawd), which means, “to rebel.”

Nimrod was the youngest son of Cush who apparently resented the curse that Noah placed on his youngest son Canaan since he names his youngest son “rebel.” By designating this name to his youngest son, the inference is that Cush trained Nimrod from childhood to be a leader in a planned and organized rebellion against God’s purposes for mankind.

To the Hebrew mind, giving a name to something involves giving a designation that is expressive of its character and nature and thus the name “**Nimrod**” is expressive of the character and nature of the youngest son of Cush.

Nimrod is presented in Scripture as the founder of the kingdom of Babylon, which is presented in

Scripture as an evil system originating from Satan in both type and prophecy (Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50:24; Rev. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2).

If you drop the first consonant of Nimrod's name and take the others, MRD, you will have the basic root of the god of Babylon, whose name was Marduk, and whom most scholars identify with Nimrod. In the Babylonian religion, Nimrod (or Marduk) held a unique place and his wife was Semiramis.

Marduk and Semiramis were the ancient god and goddess of Babylon and had a son whom Semiramis claimed was virgin-born, and they founded the mother and child cult. This was the central character of the religion of ancient Babylon, the worship of a mother and child, supposedly virgin born.

As the ancient legend says, Nimrod died and became the sun god. His wife Semiramis was impregnated by a sunbeam and gives birth to her son Tammuz (a counterfeit miraculous birth) who was later killed by a wild boar.

However, after Semiramis cries for 40 days, Tammuz comes back to life again, which is a counterfeit of the resurrection. In fact, this is the origin of a counterfeit religious system that revolves around the worship of a mother and child.

During the Babylonian captivity Jeremiah the prophet condemned Israel's worship of Semiramis "**Queen of Heaven**" (Jeremiah 7:18-19; 44:15-30) and at Jerusalem, in the Temple, they were worshipping Tammuz, the son of Semiramis (Ezekiel 8:14-15). This idolatrous worship spread around the globe where in Egypt Semiramis is called Isis and her son is Osiris, and in India, it was Isi and Iswara and in Assyria it was Ishtar and Bacchus and in Asia it was Cybele and Deoious and in ancient Greece it was Aphrodite and Eros and in ancient Rome it was Fortuna and Jupiter.

The names and places of mother-child worship change from country to country down through the ages and today permeate Roman Catholicism. This idolatrous worship began in Babylon with Nimrod and his wife.

The mother-child cult worship is a clever attempt on the part of Satan to anticipate the genuine virgin birth and thus to cast doubt upon the story

when the Son of God would later become a human being in the town of Bethlehem. This Queen of Heaven is Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, the original mother of the mother and child cult.

The cult has also crept into Christianity and forms the basis for the Mariolatry that has prevailed in the Roman Catholic Church, where the Mother and Child are worshipped as joint redeemers. This idolatrous religion culminates at last in the Bible in the book of Revelation and is described as the "**great harlot**" whose name is "**Mystery Babylon the Great**," the originator of all the harlotries and false religions of earth.

Revelation 17:1-5

"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, 'Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.'"

"with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality."

"And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns."

"The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality."

"and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, 'BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.'"

The essence of Babylonianism, as we understand from Scripture, is the attempt to gain earthly honor by means of religious authority and this has permeated Christian churches, Hindu temples, Buddhist shrines, and Mohammedan mosques.

Everywhere it is the element that marks falseness in religion, this attempt to gain earthly power and prestige by means of religious authority.

Nimrod is presented in Scripture as the founder of the kingdom of Babylon, which is presented in

Scripture as an evil system originating from Satan in both type and prophecy (Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50:24; Rev. 16:19; 17:5; 18:2).

Genesis 10:8, “Now Cush became the father of Nimrod (“rebel”); he became a mighty one on the earth.”

“**A mighty one**” is the noun *gibbor* (rw{BG!} (ghib-bore), which is used in a negative sense describing Nimrod as a tyrant who was totally in opposition to God and who revolted against God and oppressed people and used them to further his own selfish interests.

Genesis 10:9

“He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.’”

“**Hunter**” is the noun *tsayidh* (dy!x^ (tsah-yid), which is used in the Bible of one who hunts animals for food and pleasure or of one who hunts men to enslave them.

The context will determine which is in view and in Genesis 10:9, the word *tsayidh* means that Nimrod was a hunter of the souls of men rather than a hunter in the customary sense. This is indicated by the prepositional phrase “**before the Lord**” which means “**against the Lord**” since “**before**” is the preposition *l'* and the noun *panim*, which denote that Nimrod was “opposed to” or “against” God in the sense of competing with God for the souls of men. Also, further indicating that this phrase should be translated “against the Lord” is the name Nimrod, which means, “rebel.”

Genesis 10:10, “The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”

“**Babel**” is located in modern Iraq, about twenty miles south of Baghdad, near the modern city of Hilla, on the Euphrates River, south of where the Tigris and Euphrates approach.

“**Erech**” is modern Warka, the site in southern Iraq, located one hundred miles southeast of Babylon, where the first temple tower (ziggurat) and earliest cylinder seals have been recovered (Jack Finegan, *Light from the Ancient East*, pages 19-23 as cited by Unger’s *Commentary of the Old Testament* (page 49).

“**Accad**” was the ancient name of northern Babylonia, taken from the name of the city of Agade, which Sargon the Great brought to prominence as the capital of his empire, which dominated the Mesopotamian world (c. 2360-2180 B.C.).

“**Calneh**” has not been identified but was located somewhere in Mesopotamia as indicated by the prepositional phrase “**in the land of Shinar,**” which refers to the southern region of Mesopotamia, south of Baghdad in Iraq.

Genesis 10:11, “From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah.”

“**Assyria**” was in the northern part of Mesopotamia and was called “the land of Nimrod” in Micah 5:6.

“**Nineveh**” was the capital of the Assyrian Empire (ca. 800-612 B.C.), located on the eastern bank of the Tigris River in northern Mesopotamia, which is modern Iraq, in the area of the city of Mosul.

“**Rehoboth-Ir**” means “plazas of the city,” designating either a suburb of Nineveh or a place situated near the city.

“**Calah**” is modern Tell Nimrud, approximately twenty miles south of Nineveh.

Genesis 10:12, “and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.”

“**Resen**” is probably modern Selamiyeh, which is about two and a half miles northwest of Nimrud was is described in Genesis 10:12 as to be between Nineveh and Calah so that the entire complex of cities that Nimrod built was called “**the great city**” meaning it was a large metropolitan area.

Assyrian legends speak of “Ninus” as the founder of Nineveh, which is evidently a form of “Nimrod.”

These kingdoms that Nimrod established were institutions that did not guaranteed law and order but rather were simply the achievements of a lawless man who taught men to revolt against authority delegated by God.

Nimrod’s ambition was to build a world empire and a one-world government that opposes the Lord Jesus Christ, which foreshadows Antichrist who

will be the ruler of a ten-nation confederacy constituting a Revived Roman Empire, during Daniel's 70th week, which is also called by theologians as the "Tribulation Period."

The Tribulation period lasts for 7 years and can be divided into 2 3 ½ year periods. The Tribulation period begins with the rapture of the church and ends with the 2nd Advent of Christ.

The first 3 ½ years of the Tribulation can be characterized as a cold war where there will be rumors of war (Matt. 24:1-14) whereas as the last second 3 ½ years it becomes a hot war. Early in the 1st half of the Tribulation a 10-nation federation will be arrayed in the west with headquarters at Rome.

The ten-nation federation or "**ten horns**" of Daniel 7:7-8, 23-24, Revelation 13:1-10 and 17:8-10, is sometimes called the Revived Roman Empire. This kingdom is related to the Roman Empire by Daniel's vision of the "**great statue**" (Dan. 2:31-45).

The ruler of this federation (the King of the West) is referred to as "**the beast**" (Rev. 13:1-2), the "**little horn**" (Dan. 7:8), the "**prince that will come**" (Dan. 9:26-27), the "**man of lawlessness**" (2 Th. 2:3-10), and the "**scarlet beast**" (Re. 17:3).

Antichrist will be a Jew (cf. Gen. 49:17; Dan. 11:36-39), which will make him acceptable to the nation of Israel and they will feel at ease making a treaty with him and he will also make an alliance with the "**false prophet**" (Re. 19:20; 20:10). The Jews will feel secure but this will be a false sense of security since they will have signed a deal with the deceitful dictator of the Revived Roman Empire, a Jew, which they assume will ensure their national safety for the next seven years. The agreement between Israel and the Jewish dictator (aka Antichrist) of the Revived Roman Empire will stipulate that the armed might of the Revived Roman Empire will rush to the aid of Israel in the event of an enemy attack (Dan. 9:27; cf., 11:38-39).

This attack comes in the middle of the Tribulation period in the form of Russia (Joel 2:20; cf. Ezek. 38-39; Dan. 11:40). Following this attack and the destruction of the Russian armies, the cold war comes to an end because halfway through the

Tribulation, while the treaty is still in force, the anti-Christ, the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire will issue a new decree stating that all sacrifices in the Temple shall cease!

In their place, a statue of the dictator of the Revived Roman Empire ("**abomination of desolation**," Dan. 12:11) will be set up in the Most High Place for mandatory worship (Dan. 9:27; 12:11; cf., Rev. 13:15).

Antichrist's putting an end to the sacrifices in the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem along with proclaiming himself as God will mark the beginning of the last 3 ½ years of the Tribulation, which coincides with the war of Armageddon. Under intense pressure, the population of Israel will have an explicit choice. If they resist him they will face certain death (Rev. 13:15-17). Many Jews will weaken and meekly submit to the mark of the Beast. Unbelievers will accept what appears to be an opportunity to remain alive but this only guarantees their own misery and ultimate destruction (Rev. 14:11; 16:2).

Jewish believers in the Tribulation who are knowledgeable of the Word of God will obey the Lord's warning and flee (Mt. 24:15-20; cf., Dan. 11:41; Rev. 12:6) and wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to deliver them at His 2nd Advent.

Genesis 10:13-20 records the genealogy of the sons of Egypt and the eleven sons of Canaan who were all descendants of Ham.

Genesis 10:13, "Mizraim (miz'ra-im-"double straits") **became the father of Ludim** (lu'dim-"to the firebrands: travailings") **and Anamim** (an'a-mim-"affliction of the waters") **and Lehabim** (le-ha'bim-"flames") **and Naphtuhim** (naf'tu-him-"openings")."

"**Mizraim**" is the ancestor of the ancient Egyptians and is the customary name for Egypt in the Bible, which is also called "**the land of Ham**" in Psalm 104:23, suggesting that Ham accompanied his son Mizraim in the original settlement of the Nile Valley (see Psalm 78:51).

Ham is the Egyptian word for "the Hamite land" as evidenced in Psalm 78:51.

Psalm 78:51, "And smote all the firstborn in Egypt, the first issue of their virility in the tents of Ham."

Ancient Egypt was divided into three geographical sections: (1) Upper Egypt in the south (2) Middle Egypt in the center (3) Lower Egypt or Delta in the north.

Most scholars divide into two sections: (1) Upper (2) Lower.

Upper Egypt is very narrow and surrounded by mountains, which rarely take the form of peaks and the northern coast of Egypt is low and barren, and without good harbors.

The political history of Egypt traditionally begins with Menes, the Upper ruler who conquered Lower Egypt according to Egyptian tradition. The history of dynastic Egypt can be divided into the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (2100-1800 B.C.) and the New Kingdom (1550-1069 B.C.).

The pyramids were built during the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom coincides with the call of Abraham whereas the birth of Moses and Exodus of Israel took place during the New Kingdom. After the New Kingdom, Libya, Ethiopia, Persia, Hellenistic Rome and Islam dominated Egypt.

"**Ludim**" are the Libyans whose bowman were hired by the armies of Egypt and Tyre according to Jeremiah 46:9 and Ezekiel 27:10 and 30:5.

"**Anamim**," "**Lehabim**" and "**Naphtuhim**" were tribes that bordered Egypt.

Genesis 10:14, "**and Pathrusim** (path-ru-sim-"a morsel moistening") **and Casluhim** (kas'lu-him-"forgiven ones") **(from which came the Philistines** ["immigrants"]) **and Caphtorim** (kaf-tor-im-"knob or bud")."

"**Pathrusim**" were a people that migrated to Upper Egypt, and who gave their name to the district of Pathros.

The whereabouts of "**Casluhim**" is uncertain but Genesis 10:14 does record that the Philistines came from this people.

The "**Philistines**" descended from the Casluhites from Egypt and according to Jeremiah 47:4 and

Amos 9:7 that like Israel they were enslaved in Crete, from which God delivered them like Israel.

The Table of Nations connects the Philistines with other descendants of Ham, such as the Canaanites. The Philistines however, were not a single ethnic group, but rather a conglomeration of several different peoples from different origins and time periods. Therefore, the Philistines who originated from the Casluhites were different from the ones who descended from Caphtor.

"**Caphtorim**" settled on the island of Crete and its surrounding islands, as did the Philistines who came to Philistia from Crete (Amos 9:7; Jeremiah 47:4).

Genesis 10:15, "**Canaan** ("belonging to the land of red purple") **became the father of Sidon** ("hunting"), **his firstborn, and Heth** ("terror")."

"**Canaan**" is the grandson of Noah who was cursed by his grandfather and his descendants were called the "Canaanites" who lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51). The descendants of "**Canaan**" include: Mongols, Chinese, Japanese, Asians, Malaysians, American Indians, Eskimos, Polynesians, Pacific Islanders.

"**Sidon**" was the progenitor of the Phoenicians and gave his name to oldest Canaanites city on the Mediterranean seacoast north of Israel, and which city was important long before Tyre came to prominence.

"**Heth**" was the ancestor of the Hittites who had a great empire in Asia Minor for over eight hundred years. For many years the critics have ridiculed the Bible because of the Hittites since for many years there was no archaeological evidence for their existence, thus they used this lack of evidence to attack the veracity and inerrancy of the Bible but over 10,000 clay tablets with Hittite laws and customs have been discovered by archaeologists.

The Hittites were present in the land of Canaan during the time of Abraham according to Genesis 15:19-21 and they reached the zenith of their power sometime later and still possessed great power at the time of Solomon a thousand years later according to 2 Chronicles 1:17. There is some evidence that when the Hittite empire finally

crumbled that the remnant of these people fled eastward.

The Cuneiform monuments record the name of the Hittites as “Khittae” and this may well have been modified later to “Cathay” as they settled in the Far East. Also, another name in this list that appears in Genesis 10:17 that is linked with China are the Sinites whose name derives from a presumed son of Canaan whose name was Sin. The Sinites migrated eastward until they came into Western China, where they founded the ancient Empire of China and gave their name to the land.

There is a direct connection between the word China and the word “Sinim,” the biblical name for China. The Sinites pushed eastward and toward the north over the land bridge into Alaska and are the people who settled the Americas in prehistoric days and became the ancestors of the Eskimos and Indians who, to this very day, betray their Mongoloid ancestry.

Archaeologists have noted a number of similarities between the Hittites and the Mongoloids since both were known to have pioneered the art of smelting and casting iron and in the breeding and training of horses.

Genesis 10:16, “and the Jebusite (“trodden down by armies”) and the Amorite (“a boaster”) and the Girgashite (“dwelling on a clayey soil”).”

The “**Jebusite**” settled in “Jebus,” which is the name of Jerusalem when this tribe held it (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 19:10) and it wasn’t until David’s reign that they were finally driven out (2 Sam. 5:6-7; cf. 1 Kings 9:20).

According to Ezekiel 16:3, the “**Amorite**” along with the “**Jebusite**” founded the city of Jerusalem and according to Numbers 13:29, they were scattered throughout Israel’s hill country on either side of the Jordan River.

During the days of Jacob they were in Shechem according to Genesis 48:22 and at the time of Moses they were in Transjordan from the Arnon to Mount Hermon according to Deuteronomy 3:8 as well as from the wilderness to the Jordan according to Judges 11:22.

During the days of Joshua the “**Amorite**” were in five towns of Judah according to Joshua 10:5 and

then in the next generation, they were in three towns according to Judges 13:5 and then during the period of the Judges, they lived in Gilead according to Judges 10:8.

The Girgashites also lived in the land of Canaan and according to Genesis 15:21, the Lord promised Abram that his descendants would displace the “Girgashite” as well as the other Canaanite tribes and this promise was confirmed to Moses in Deuteronomy 7:1 and to Joshua in Joshua 3:10 and 24:11.

Genesis 10:17, “and the Hivite (“villagers”) and the Arkite (“my annoyance”) and the Sinite (“thorn” or “clay”).”

The Hivites settled in the land of Canaan and was displaced by Israel under Joshua (Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 7:1; Josh. 9:1).

Genesis 34:2 records that they were in the land of Shechem and according to Genesis 36:2, Esau took a Hivite for a wife and 1 Kings 9:20 records that Solomon used them as builders. Judges 3:3 records that they settled in the foothills of Lebanon.

The “**Arkite**” resided in the town of Irqata located along the Phoenician border approximately twelve miles northwest of Tripoli, Lebanon and which town is known today as “Tell-Arqa.”

The name of Sinites still appears in the cities of Nahr as-Sinn and Sinn addarb, which are both in close proximity to Arqa. The Phoenicians knew the Sinites as the Usnu and the Assyrians called them the Usana and Siannu. From its position in the list it is inferred that the Sinites lived toward the north, perhaps in the northern part of the Lebanon district.

In the northern district of Lebanon, a mountain fortress named “Sinna” was located and in the time of Jerome (ca. A.D. 400), there were ruins there named “Sinum” or “Sini.”

Genesis 10:18, “and the Arvadite (“restless wanderer”) and the Zemarite (“double woolens”) and the Hamathite (“fortress”); and afterward the families of the Canaanite were spread abroad.”

The Arvadites lived north of the Arkites on the seacoast and on the island of Aradus, which today

is called “Ruad” and lies north of the bay of Tripoli, about two miles out to sea. The Arvadites were skillful seamen and worked as ship captains, helmsmen and mercenaries to the Tyrians.

Later, the island of Arvad was to play a crucial role in controlling certain areas of the mainland during the conquests of Alexander the Great. The Arvadites were also known in the Armarna tablets as the “Arwada.”

The Zemarites were known to the Assyrians as the Simirra, and to the Egyptians as the Sumur and the name is still preserved in the modern city of Sumra, just north of Tripoli, which is six miles south of Arvad.

The Hamathites are inhabitants of modern “Harma,” the ancient Syrian city on the Orontes River, which is 250 miles north of Jerusalem and north of Damascus in Syria.

Hamath marked the northernmost boundary of the Israelite kingdom reached by David, Solomon and the king of the Northern Kingdom, Jeroboam II (Num. 13:21; 34:8; Josh. 13:5; 2 Sam. 8:9-10; 1 Kings 8:65; 2 Kings 14:25-28; Ezek. 47:20).

The city was extremely important since it was located on the Orontes River, along the main highway, which connected Egypt to Asia Minor. Hamath was a part of the Hittite Empire, preserving Hittite culture after its fall in 1200 B.C. and was ultimately incorporated into Assyria becoming a province of that nation in 720 B.C. and a number of its citizens were deported according to 2 Kings 24.

Genesis 10:19, “The territory of the Canaanite extended from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; as you go toward Sodom and Gomorrah and Admah and Zeboiim (ze-boy’im), as far as Lasha.”

In Genesis 10:19, Moses defines the borders of the Canaanites because it is this land that the Lord will dispossess for Israel and fulfill the prophecy of Noah in Genesis 9:24-25 regarding Canaan.

The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 8 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast

of Jerusalem. From Gaza, the border extends to Sodom and Gomorrah east or southeast of the Dead Sea.

“Gerar” is the modern Tell Abu Hureira, which is 11 miles southeast of Gaza and “Gaza” is the modern “Gaza.”

“Sodom” and “Gomorrah” are on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and “Lasha” on the northern interior, which is identified with “Laish-Dan” (Judg. 18:29), the Israelite city the furthest north.

“Sodom” and “Gomorrah” helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians “the cities of the plain.”

Abraham pleads to the Lord to spare these cities on account of Lot, which is recorded in Genesis 18:16-33 and the Lord fulfilled Abraham’s request but destroyed the rest of the inhabitants of the city, which is recorded in Genesis 19.

Genesis 10:21-31 gives us the record of the sons of Shem and their descendants.

Genesis 10:21, “Also to Shem (“renown”), the father of all the children of Eber (“emigrants” or “to vanish to the region beyond”), and the older brother of Japheth (“opened, enlarged, expanded”), children were born.”

Genesis 10:21 emphasizes that Shem is the ancestor of all the children of Eber because Abraham and the Israelites are identified as descendants of Eber, which would be important to Moses’ readers since they were descendants of Abraham and Israelites.

According to Genesis 10:24, Eber was the son of Shelah and his name means, “region beyond or over (the river)” indicating the land of Canaan that was beyond the Jordan River.

The term “Hebrew” is from “Eber” which anglicized Heber in Luke 3:35. Abraham was called a “Hebrew” according to Genesis 14:13 indicating that he was a descendant of Eber. Therefore, from this point forward in Genesis 10:21, Moses is concerned almost exclusively with the Shemites and in particular the most prominent

branch of the Shemites, the “**sons of Eber,**” since he and his readers were descendants of Eber.

Genesis 10:22, “The sons of Shem were Elam (“eternity”) **and Asshur** (“happy, successful”) **and Arpachshad** (“he cursed the breast bottle”) **and Lud** (“firebrand, traveling”) **and Aram** (“highland”).”

The Elamites settled on the Persian Gulf east of Babylonia or Mesopotamia with Susa (Hebrew: Shushan) as their capital.

Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, was the leader of the confederacy of nations, which invaded Canaan during the days of Abram according to Genesis 14:4-5.

The Elamites later merged with the Medes who were descendants of Madai and thus of Japheth, to form the Persian Empire (Antiquities of the Jews, book 1, chapter 6, paragraph 4).

“**Asshur**” was the founder of the Assyrians but as we studied with the descendants of Ham, according to Genesis 10:11, Nimrod invaded the land of Asshur and founded Nineveh and a number of other cities. Therefore, as a result, the Assyrian people and culture were a mixture of Semitic racial stock and Hamitic (Babylonian) culture, language and religion but eventually, this mixture was entirely supplanted by Semitic culture that spread throughout Mesopotamia.

“**Arpachshad**” was in the direct line leading to Abraham and his linear lineage is expanded in Genesis 11:12-17 and Josephus claims that Arpachshad was the ancestor of the Chaldeans (Antiquities of the Jews, book 1, chapter 6, paragraph 4).

The fourth son of Shem was “**Lud**” who was the ancestor of the Lydians who later settled in western Asia Minor and were famed for the skill of their archers and spoke an Indo-European language and their land was conquered by Cyrus, king of Persia in the year 546 BC.

The fifth son of Shem was “**Aram**” who is the father of the Aramaeans who are so prominent in Old Testament history and became a great nation whose Aramaic language was adopted by Babylon and Assyria.

Genesis 10:23, “The sons of Aram were Uz (“counsel”) **and Hul** (“circle”) **and Gether** (“fear”) **and Mash** (“drawn out”).”

“**Uz**” is the first son of Aram and grandson of Shem and we don’t know precisely where his descendants settled but we do know that Job’s home was Uz according to Job 1:1, which was also mentioned in Jeremiah 25:20.

Ptolemy claimed the inhabitants of Uz lived in the Arabian Desert west of Babylon, near Mount Seir or Edom, which is now Jordan.

The descendants of “**Hul**” settled north of the Sea of Galilee, where they gave their name to the lake and vale of Huleh, which in Joshua 11:5 and 7 are called the “**Waters of Merom.**”

The descendants of “**Gether**” settled to the south of Damascus and Josephus identifies them as the latter-day Bactrians who were famous for a breed of camel.

The fourth son of Aram was “**Mash**” and is associated with the Akkadian region “**Mashu,**” which appears in the Gilgamesh epic and is identified with the mountains of Lebanon since they are high mountains to the west of Mesopotamia.

Genesis 10:24, “Arpachshad became the father of Shelah (“sprout”); **and Shelah became the father of Eber.**”

Nothing appears in secular sources concerning “**Shelah**” and nothing much is said about him in the Bible except that he was the father Eber who was the ancestor of the Hebrews through Peleg and thirteen Arabian tribes through Joktan.

Genesis 10:25, “Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, (“division”) **for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother's name was Joktan** (“smallness, insignificant”).”

Peleg’s name means, “division” and was thus named because of the Tower of Babel where the Lord geographically “divided” the human race as a result of confusing the universal language and vocabulary they used into many different languages and dialects and this event is recorded in Genesis 11:1-9.

Genesis 10:25 contains the figure of speech called “metonymy of the subject” where the earth is put for its inhabitants; therefore, we could translate “**the earth**” as “the earth’s inhabitants.”

“**Divided**” is the niphil perfect form of the verb *palagh* (gl^P*) (paw-lag), which refers to the dividing of the human race geographically as a result of the Lord confusing their universal language into many different languages and dialects.

The meaning of the name Peleg is confirmed by the Akkadian noun *pulukku*, which means a dividing up of territory by means of borders and boundaries and the Akkadian verb meaning to divide at the borders, is *palaka*. Thus, the phrase “**in his (Peleg’s) days the earth was divided,**” is a reference to the fact that Noah’s descendants were dispersed when God judged them following their attempt to build the tower of Babel.

The phrase “**the earth was divided in his days**” is “not” a reference to widespread geological land slips separating continents but rather a comparison of Genesis 10:25 with Genesis 11:1-9 indicates that it refers to the human race being divided geographically as a result of the Lord confusing their universal language into many different languages and dialects.

Genesis 11:1-9 records that the human race spoke one language and that they attempted to unite against God and as a result God confused their universal language into many different languages. The inability to understand one another caused the separation geographically of the human race.

Remember, Genesis 10 is a description of the human race after the Tower of Babel, which is recorded in Genesis 11. This is indicated by the common refrain that appears in Genesis 10:5, 20, 31, and 32, which records that the descendants of Japheth, Ham and Shem were divided by their ethnicity (“**families**”), geography (“**lands**”), language (“**every one according to his language**”) and politics (“**nations**”) indicating Genesis 10 was written after the Tower of Babel.

The continents came into existence as a result of the Flood during the days of Noah since according to Genesis 7:11, the subterranean waters underneath the earth erupted and broke apart

flooding the earth causing great geological changes in the earth’s geography. Prior to the Flood, there was a super continent but after the Flood there were seven continents and instead of one ocean as there was prior to the Flood, now there were several oceans.

“**Joktan**” is the progenitor of the thirteen southern Arabian tribes and is remembered by modern Arabs as *Yaqtan*.

Modern tribes of South Arabia claim that pure Arabs are Semitic Arabs descended of Joktan whereas they refer to Hamitic Arabs disdainfully as *Musta 'rabs*, that is, pretended Arabs. Joktan’s name is preserved in the ancient town of *Jectan*, near present-day Mecca.

Genesis 10:26, “Joktan became the father of Almodad (“not measured”) and Sheleph (“a drawing out”) and Hazarmaveth (ha'zar-ma'veth) (“settlement of death”) and Jerah (“new moon”).”

Joktan had thirteen sons and the oldest of which was “**Almodad,**” which is a south Arabian name indicating a south Arabian tribe.

“**Sheleph**” is another southern Arabian tribe who were known to the pre-Islamic Arabs as the “Salif.”

The descendants of “**Hazarmaveth**” populated the two hundred mile long valley that runs parallel to the southern coast of Arabia, which is known to this day as the “Hadramaut,” which is a direct transposition into Arabic of the name Hazarmaveth. The ancient geographer Strabo tells us that the tribe of “**Hazarmaveth**” was one of the four main tribes of Arabs in his day. This area has long been associated with the frankincense trade and in the first and second centuries of the Christian era, was the center of a great civilization (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopaedia of the Bible, page 3:49).

“**Jerah**” and his descendants settled in southern Arabia since the Arab city that bore Jerah's name, which was called by Ptolemy as “Jerakon Kome,” lay on the Mahra coast close to the Hadramaut, which is located in southern Arabia.

Genesis 10:27, “and Hadoram (“noble honor”) and Uzal (“I shall be flooded”) and Diklah (“palm grove”).”

“**Hadoram**” and his descendants settled in southern Arabia.

“**Uzal**” and his descendants settled in Yemen, which is indicated by the fact that Arab historians render the name of “**Uzal**” as “Azal,” the ancient pre-Islamic name of the city of “Sanaa,” which today is the capital of the modern People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The Akkadians referred to “**Diklah**” as “Diklath,” and the Assyrians knew it as “Idiklat,” all of which transpose into Greek as “Tigris” indicating the area in which these people settled, appears to be north of the Persian Gulf or at least in the north-east extremity of the Arabian peninsula.

Genesis 10:28, “and Obal (“stripped bare”) and Abimael (a-bim’ a-el) (“my father is God”) and Sheba (“seven” or “oath”).”

“**Obal**” settled in southwest Arabia and probably in the present-day Yemen according to inscriptions and Arab historians who called the descendants of “Obal,” “Ebal.”

The name “**Abimael**” is linguistically south Arabian and the tribe that bear the name is indicated as south Arabian and this is confirmed by ancient Sabean inscriptions.

“**Sheba**” is located some one hundred miles north of modern Aden in southwest Arabia and is well known in the Old Testament (1 Kings 10:1; Jer. 6:20).

Genesis 10:29, “and Ophir (“reducing to ashes”) and Havilah (“anguish”) and Jobab (“he will cause crying”); all these were the sons of Joktan.”

“**Ophir**” and his descendants settled in an area between Saba and in the Yemen as claimed by pre-Islamic Arabian inscriptions and their name appears to have been preserved in the coastal town of “Ma’afir” in southwest Arabia.

This region was famous for having gold in its streams according to Job 22:24, Psalm 45:19, Isaiah 13:12 and 1 Chronicles 29:4.

“**Havilah**” is not the same one mentioned as one of Ham’s descendants and a son of Cush in Genesis 10:7 but rather was the son of Joktan who migrated to southwest Arabia near Kualan, in northwest Yemen, since a Sabean inscription locates a place named Hualan with this broad region.

An Arabian tribe from the southwest corner of the peninsula, in modern Yemen, is named after their ancestor “**Jobab**” and it is attested in a number of inscriptions.

In Genesis 10:30, Moses defines the borders of the Shemites since it is important to both Moses and his readers who were descendants of Shem.

Genesis 10:30, “Now their settlement extended from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the hill country of the east.”

“**Sephar**” is traditionally identified with “Isfar” in the south of Hadramaut or Zafar harbor city in Yemen and “**Mesha**” is a territory in North Arabia, far south of Hadramaut.

Genesis 10:31, “These are the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, by their lands, according to their nations.”

Genesis 10:31 records that the descendants of Shem were divided by their ethnicity (“**families**”), geography (“**lands**”), language (“**every one according to his language**”) and politics (“**nations**”) indicating Genesis 10 was written after the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 10:32, “These are the families of the sons of Noah, according to their genealogies, by their nations; and out of these the nations were separated on the earth after the flood.”

Seventy nations are presented in the Table of Nations: Fourteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-six from Shem.

Table of Nations and the Sovereignty of God

Bruce Waltke writes, “The numbers seven and seventy in the Table of Nations represents the nations as dependent upon their Creator and under His sovereignty whether they acknowledge Him as such or not” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 174).

Although the Table does not mention it, the nations receive their time and place as the outworking of God's sovereignty.

Deuteronomy 32:1-8

"Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth."

"Let my teaching drop as the rain, my speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass and as the showers on the herb."

"For I proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe greatness to our God!"

"The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He."

"They have acted corruptly toward Him, they are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation."

"Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you? He has made you and established you."

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of all generations. Ask your father, and he will inform you, your elders, and they will tell you."

"When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel."

The term "sovereignty" connotes a situation in which a person, from his innate dignity, exercises supreme power, with no areas of his province outside his jurisdiction. As applied to God, the term "sovereignty" indicates His complete power over all of creation, so that He exercises His will absolutely, without any necessary conditioning by a finite will or wills.

Isaiah 40:15, "Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust."

Isaiah 40:17, "All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless."

The apostle Paul also taught that the nations receive their time and place as a result of the sovereignty of God.

Acts 17:22-34

"So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.'"

'For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you."

"The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands."

"nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things."

"and He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation."

"that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us."

"for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'"

"Being then the children of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man."

"Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent."

"because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

"Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some began to sneer, but others said, 'We shall hear you again concerning this.'"

“So Paul went out of their midst. But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.”

Psalms 66:7, “He rules by His might forever; His eyes keep watch on the nations; Let not the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah.”

The humanity of Christ in hypostatic union has been promoted by the Father as the supreme ruler of history as a result of His victory over Satan at the Cross.

Colossians 2:9, 10

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

“and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”

Philippians 2:5-11

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus.”

“who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.”

“but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.”

“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.”

“so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”

“and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

1 Timothy 6:13-16

“I charge you in the presence of God, who gives life to all things, and of Christ Jesus, who testified the good confession before Pontius Pilate.”

“that you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“which He will bring about at the proper time - He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords.”

“who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.”

Genesis 11

Genesis 10 and 11 give us the historical links, which connect for us the time of Noah with the days of Abraham whose story is told in Genesis 11:26-25:7.

Now, although Genesis 10 and 11 may appear boring to read, to the serious student of the Word of God, they furnish valuable information.

Remember what Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17:

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

“so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Unfortunately, we live in days of apostasy or reversionism where church age believers find it boring and unimportant to study Genesis 10 and 11. Paul prophesied of this state among church age believers in 2 Timothy 4:1-5.

2 Timothy 4:1-5

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom.”

“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.”

“and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

“But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”

Therefore, Genesis 10-11 provides us with extremely important information. For example:

(1) Without Genesis 10 and 11 and the genealogies which they contain, we would be unable to trace the fulfillment of Noah’s prophecy in Genesis 9:24-27.

(2) We should be without any satisfactory solution to the ethnological problem presented by the variety and number of the different nations and tongues.

(3) We would also be left in ignorance concerning the cause (from the human side), which led up to God abandoning His dealings with the nations and singling out Abram to be the father of His chosen people Israel.

Now, we studied in Genesis 10 that after the Flood the human race was divided by ethnicity, geography, language and politics according to Genesis 10:32. We also saw that this was the direct result of the Lord sovereignly intervening at the Tower of Babel and dispersing a Satanically inspired rebellion by the human race against His sovereign rulership according to Genesis 11:1-9. Therefore, Genesis 11:1-9 records for us the “reason” for the division of the nations and the multiplicity of languages and dialects and cultures that are in the world today and that the Lord established “nationalism” whereas Satan promotes “internationalism.”

The term “Tower of Babel” does not appear in the Bible but is used popularly for ziggurat structure built on the plain of Shinar where the descendants of Noah migrated and settled after the Flood.

The name “Babel” has no connection with the Hebrew *balal*, “He confused” and its meaning is in fact patent in its Assyrian form, *Bab-ili*, “gate of god.” The final syllable, *el* in Hebrew, is common to all Semitic languages and means, “god” while *bab* is well-known in Assyrian, Arabic, Aramaic and late Hebrew.

In Genesis 11:9, Moses is indulging in a play on words, meaning a verbal irony. Babel, therefore, became a synonym for the confusion caused by the language barriers, which God imposed on the human race because of their pride and arrogance in attempting to establish a one-world government and state religion that would honor mankind rather than God and would be independent of Him.

Now, we must also be aware of the fact that Genesis 10:8-12 and Genesis 11:1-9 go together and therefore should be read as two parentheses and when done so they link Nimrod to this Tower of Babel rebellion.

Genesis 10:8-12

“Now Cush became the father of Nimrod (“rebel”); he became a mighty one on the earth.”

“He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; therefore it is said, ‘Like Nimrod a mighty hunter before the LORD.’”

“The beginning of his kingdom was Babel and Erech and Accad and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.”

“From that land he went forth into Assyria, and built Nineveh and Rehoboth-Ir and Calah.”

“and Resen between Nineveh and Calah; that is the great city.”

Now, Genesis 11:1-9 is divided into scenes that a change in actors, situations or activities identifies.

Scene one: The human race had one language and settles on the plains of Shinar in Iraq (11:1-2)

Genesis 11:1

“Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.”

Genesis 11:2

“It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.”

Scene two: The ambition of the human race to establish a one world government and religion in opposition to God (11:3-4)

Genesis 11:3

“They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.”

Genesis 11:4

“They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’”

Scene three: The Lord’s decree to confound their universal language in order to deal with their rebellion (11:5-7)

Genesis 11:5

“The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.”

Genesis 11:6

“The LORD said, ‘Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.’”

Genesis 11:7

“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.”

Scene four: The Lord disperses the rebellion by confounding their universal language into many languages (11:8-9).

Genesis 11:8

“So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.”

Genesis 11:9

“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

The first two scenes emphasize humanity and lead up to a central scene where the Lord intervenes. The last two scenes emphasize the Lord and

describe the consequences of this divine intervention.

Now, Moses employs a “chiastic” structure in the Hebrew to focus attention upon the fact that the Lord is the reason for the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 and the division of peoples and multiplicity of languages in the world. In fact, the entire “chiastic” structure of the passage exposes the struggle between the human race and God. It reveals the tension between the word of the people with the word of the Lord.

When I say “chiastic” structure I am referring to an important structural device that is commonly found in ancient literature called “chiasmus” or “chiasm,” which is the use of inverted parallelism of form and/or content which moves toward and away from a strategic central component. In its most general sense, “chiasmus” involves inverted parallelism between two or more (synonymously or antithetically) corresponding words, phrases, or units of thought.

For example, the saying, “winners never quit and quitters never win” contains this device: “Winners [A] never quit [B] and quitters [B’] never win [A’].” It is found in **Revelation 3:7: He who opens [A] and no one shuts [B], and shuts [B’] and no one opens [A’].**

So “chiasm” is a technique that highlights major themes, which reverses words or events in successive parallel clauses or sections. Let’s first look at the alternating or chiastic structure of Genesis 11:1-9 in relation to the word of humanity versus the word of the Lord:

Words of the people (11:1-4).

A One language and a common vocabulary (11:1).

B “Come” + 2 Cohortatives (11:3).

C “Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower” (11:4).

D “Let us make a name for ourselves” (11:4).

E “Otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth” (11:4).

Words of the Lord (11:5-9).

- A One people and one language (11:6).
- B **“Come”** + cohortative (11:7).
- C Ceased to build (11:8).
- D **“Its name was called Babel”** (11:9).
- E The Lord scattered them over the whole earth (11:9).

Let’s look at the “chiastic” structure of Genesis 11:1-9 in relation to the tension between the human race and the Lord.

- A **“The whole earth used the same language and the same words”** (11:1).
- B **“They found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there”** (11:2).
- C **“They said to one another”** (11:3).
- D **“Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly”** (11:3)
- E **“A city and tower”** (11:4).
- X **“The LORD came down”** (11:5)
- E **“The city and the tower”** (11:5)
- D **“Come let Us...confuse their language”** (11:5).
- C **“They will not understand one another’s speech”** (11:7).
- B **“The Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of the entire earth”** (11:8).
- A **“The Lord confused the language of the entire earth”** (11:9).

Let’s compare each letter and by doing so we will see the contrast between the Lord and humanity and the tension between the two.

A/A contrasts the entire world speaking a universal language with the confusion of this universal language into many different languages.

B/B contrasts the desire of the human race to stay consolidated at Shinar and the power of the Lord, which scatters them.

C/C contrasts the strength of their unification in opposition to God with their divided communication and resulting segregation.

D/D contrasts the resolve of the human race to build in opposition to God versus the resolve of God to tear down.

E/E contrasts the human and divine viewpoints towards the city and the tower.

From the human perspective, the rebels, the city and the tower symbolize the ability of collective humanity to defy the law of God whereas from the divine perspective they symbolize the threat of fallen humanity independent of God under Satan’s dominion to the dominion of God on planet earth.

The chiastic structure reveals the theme of reversal around the pivot, which is **“the Lord came down.”**

Everything in the passage revolves around “X” where the Lord condescends and descends to observe the city and the tower and to thwart this rebellious attempt to establish independently of God a one-world government and religion. Therefore, the chiastic structure of Genesis 11:1-9 emphasizes the reason (rebellion against God) and cause (God) for the dispersion of the people, namely, the Lord.

Genesis 11:1

“Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words.”

Genesis 11:1 contains the figure of speech called “metonymy of the subject” where the earth is put for its inhabitants; therefore, we could translate **“the whole earth”** as “every single one of the earth’s inhabitants.”

“Whole” is the adjective *kol*, which is used in a distributive sense meaning “every single one.”

“Same language” means that the descendants of Noah were completely unified by language and vocabulary, thus no language barriers.

“The same words” in the Hebrew literally means, “one words” and denotes the fact that every single one of the earth’s inhabitants were unified by language and vocabulary and dialect.

Henry Morris writes, “This faculty of human speech and language is truly of the most amazing attributes of mankind. The evolutionist is utterly unable to explain the unbridgeable gulf between the chatterings of animals and human language. The unique and fundamental essence of speech in the very nature of man is underscored in the revelation of God to man through His Word. Christ Himself is the living Word! ‘God has spoken to us by His Son’ (Heb. 1:2). It is not too much to say that this was the very reason man was created able to speak and to hear; that that is, in order that there might first be communication between God and man and, secondarily, between man and man. But when men began to prostitute this divine gift in order to cooperate in rebellion against their Maker, in a most appropriate judgment God confused their tongues and thereby forced them to separate from each other” (The Genesis Record, page 267).

Genesis 11:2

“It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.”

“**Journeyed**” is the verb *nasa`* (us^h*) (naw-saw), which means, “to pull up” stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for “breaking camp” and presents the image of people “pulling up the stakes” to their tents in order to travel and represents the descendants of Noah as restless wanderers.

“**East**”: (1) Preposition *min* (/m!) (meen) (2) Noun *qedhem* (sr#q#) (keh-dem).

The preposition *min* usually means, “from” thus indicating that the people journeyed from the east suggesting that after migrating from Ararat in Armenia they would have had to travel far southeast into the region of Persian, now known as Iran and then from there headed westward into Mesopotamia, which is now Iraq. But the usage of this preposition *min* in Genesis 2:8, 3:24, 12:8 and 13:11 indicates that “eastward” must be the correct translation since “eastward” would include southeastward and this is confirmed by the fact that Babylon, the land of Shinar lies southeast of Ararat.

Genesis 11:2, “It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.”

“**Found**” is the verb *matsa* (ax*m*) (maw-tsaw), which in context refers to the fact that the people unintentionally “discovered” or “came upon” the land of Shinar since they did not know of its existence because the post-diluvian world was yet unexplored.

“**Plain**” is the noun *biq’ah* (hu*q+B@) (bik-aw), which refers to a “broad plain” that was fertile and would be attractive to settle in.

The phrase “**the land of Shinar**” defines exactly where in the east the descendants of Noah settled down, namely, the southern region of Mesopotamia, south of Baghdad in Iraq.

Genesis 11:3

“They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.”

“**Come**” is the verb *hav* (bh^), which appears three times in Genesis 11:1-9, and is attributed to the people twice in Genesis 11:3-4 where it expresses the desire of the people to be independent of God and to bring glory to themselves whereas in Genesis 11:7, it expresses the Trinity’s desire to disperse this rebellion.

In Genesis 11:3-4, the verb expresses the rebellious resolve of the people to act independently of God manifesting itself in the building of the city of Babylon and a tower, which they built as a memorial to honor themselves and worship the creation rather than to honor and worship God.

Merrill F. Unger makes the following comments regarding the material to build the Tower of Babel: “The soft alluvial mud of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, whether baked in the sun or the kiln, offered a ready and inexpensive source of building material. It was a substitute for stone and much more plentiful” (Unger’s Old Testament Commentary, page 51).

Henry M. Morris makes the following comments on the building material for the Tower of Babel: “The more common manner of construction in

antiquity was apparently to use stone, with a clay mortar. When bricks were used, as in Egypt and Assyria, they were only sun-dried. The Babylonian construction was stronger and more enduring, so the writer called special attention to it. Furnace-treated bricks were used instead of stone, and bitumen instead of mortar. This “slime” was probably tarry material from the abundant asphalt pits in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. Archaeology has revealed that this type of kiln-fired brick and asphalt construction was common in ancient Babylon” (Genesis Flood, page 268).

Genesis 11:4

“They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.’”

Nimrod’s ambition was to build a one world government and religion that was independent of God and brought glory and honor to men rather than God and worshipped the creature rather than the Creator and in order for this ambition to be realized two factors were essential: (1) Geographical: Nimrod needed a center where the people could meet to express their unity of purpose to build this one world government and religion, thus, we read, **“come, let us build for ourselves a city.”** (2) Psychological: Nimrod needed a motivation to encourage and inspire his followers and this would be supplied by the phrase **“let us make us for ourselves a name.”**

“City” is the noun *ir* (ryU@) (eer), which refers to a fortified city that had its own king with surrounding villages.

None of our modern terms such as city, town or village adequately convey the meaning or the mental picture contained in this word. Not only is there a difference between the modern and ancient city, there were differences between the ancient cities themselves, making a definition even more difficult.

The primary distinction between a city and a village is that the former *ir* generally had a wall and the frequent reference to the “gate” of the city where governmental functions were held, underscores the walled nature of cities.

Elders of the cities are often mentioned who had some governmental functions and as early as Gilgamesh, cities in Mesopotamia had a council of elders whom the king had to consult before beginning a war.

The villages were in an adjacent agricultural area of a city and were in turn dependent on the city for protection. In the ancient world, the city was primarily intended for religious and public purposes or gatherings. Therefore, based upon the meaning of this word *ir* in the Hebrew, we know that this city that Nimrod and his followers decided to build would be fortified with a wall with surrounding villages and an adjacent agricultural area and would be for religious and public purposes.

The building of this city would have taken place after a council of elders whom Nimrod presided over and would be the center or meeting of this one world government and religion.

“Tower” is the noun *mighdal* (IR*G+m!) (mig-dawl), which is derived from the verb *gadhal* (ld^F*) (gaw-dole), “to be great” and does not refer to the defensive stone watch towers of Canaan but rather to the Mesopotamian ziggurat.

The “ziggurat” comes from the term *ziqurratu*, apparently meaning “peak,” or the highest point of a mountain and were massive and lofty, solid-brick, staircase structures and at the top, there was a place to worship the stars of the stellar universe and the fallen angels.

According to all accounts, and judging from the extant ruins of the various buildings in those countries, Babylonian towers were always rectangular, built in stages, and provided with an inclined ascent continued along each side to the top. Since religious ceremonies were performed thereon, they were generally surmounted by a chapel in which sacred objects or images were kept (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, volume one, page 383).

The Tower was “not” built as protection against another flood since if the people wanted to avoid another flood they would have settled in a mountainous area but rather, the people built the tower was built to bring glory and honor to

themselves, to deify themselves and to express their independence from God.

Henry M. Morris, “The great tower would dominate the city, both architecturally and culturally. It would serve as the focal point of the political and religious life of the population, and would be a symbol of their unity and strength” (Genesis Record, page 269).

There are many ziggurats in Babylon but the one considered to be the tower of Babel of their ancient city is called “The Temple of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth,” which was called by Nebuchadnezzar, “the tower of Babylon.”

This structure was situated in the southern portion of the city, not far from the right bank of the Euphrates and was dedicated to the god of Babylon, Marduk. If you drop the first consonant of Nimrod's name and take the others, MRD, you will have the basic root of the god of Babylon, whose name was Marduk, and whom most scholars identify with Nimrod. Therefore, the “Temple of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth” that is situated in the southern portion of the city of Babylon and was called the “tower of Babel” by Nabopolassar and Nebuchadnezzar was dedicated to Marduk, who was Nimrod.

Jewish tradition suggests the tower was destroyed by fire from heaven and some legends have it that it was knocked down by strong winds but more than likely, that building of the city resumed at some later date.

The building of the city stopped with the establishment of multiple languages, which led to the departure of her inhabitants but when the population increased again, the building of the city continued, with the result that Babylon ultimately became the greatest city in the ancient world. The same thing holds true with the tower, which was refurbished by Nabopolassar (625-605) and Nebuchadnezzar II (604-562).

The prepositional phrase “**into heaven**” expresses the people's desire to compete with God just as Satan has attempted to.

The ambition of the people is not to honor and glorify the Lord but rather to glorify and honor themselves as indicated by the phrases, “**come, let**

us build for ourselves a city,” and “**let us make for ourselves a name.”**

The phrase “**let us make for ourselves a name**” expresses the people's desire to acquire fame or a reputation in the sense that in building this city and tower, they would find significance, security and fulfillment and immortality.

The people erroneously thought that they would find significance, security, fulfillment in life and immortality in building this city and tower.

One of the reasons for the building of the city and the tower was the desire to cling together as indicated by the sentence, “**otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”**

They did not want to be scattered because they were fearful and they were fearful because they did not trust God and they did not trust God because they did not know God.

We must remember that the Flood changed the face and features of the earth drastically. Climatologically and topographically the post-diluvian world was dramatically different from the antediluvian world. The mountains must have grown higher and more uninhabitable. The antediluvian world had a uniform and comfortable temperature but the post-diluvian world did not.

Now, there were storms and extreme temperature differentials in the post-diluvian world. The curse of the ground must have let itself be felt more severely. The earth was a frightening place and it would take faith in God to venture out into it and the people did not have faith in Him.

What had taken place among the people is that they feared that they would not survive if they would move out of the fertile valley of Shinar, thus they feared that God would no longer take care of them. They did not trust His covenant that He not only made with Noah but his descendants that He would never again destroy the earth with a flood. They did not want to honor His Name, but wanted to replace it with their own, and they had no thought of trusting Him to keep them alive.

By attempting to build this city and tower they were attempting to find their own security rather than finding it with God. They believed that they

were completely on their own because they did not have faith in Him and they did not have faith in Him because they did not know God.

These people thought that if they did not take care of themselves, then nobody else would and certainly not God, who had destroyed millions of people in the flood. Therefore, they entered into fear worry and anxiety and acted upon their fears by building this city and tower.

They built this city and tower in unbelief meaning they did not trust that God would take care of them and they did not trust Him because they did not know God or understand who and what He is.

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

They built the city of Babylon and the Tower of Babel because of fear, which is a great motivator and is a tool used by Satan to enslave people to his cosmic system. The Lord Jesus Christ came to deliver the human race from this bondage.

Hebrews 2:14, 15

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

"and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Believers are prohibited from entering into fear, worry and anxiety since it is an expression of unbelief.

Matthew 6:25-34

"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"

"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

"And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"

"And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin."

"yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these."

"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!"

"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"

"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."

"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Hebrews 13:5-6, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU," so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

1 Peter 5:6-7, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Philippians 4:6, "At this very moment, all of you stop continuing to be anxious about absolutely anything, but rather, concerning anything at all by means of reverential prayer in the presence of the Father and by means of petition accompanied by the giving of thanks, let your specific detailed requests be repeatedly made known in the presence of the Father."

The sin of these builders of the city of Babylon and the Tower of Babel was “not” disobedience to the command in Genesis 9:1 and 7 to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth, which are more blessings providing capacity to procreate in great numbers rather than commands.

The filling of the earth would take place by having offspring in great numbers and not by scattering or in other words, putting geographical distance between oneself and one’s family. Scattering is not equivalent to filling and so the builders of the tower of Babel and the city of Babylon were not disobeying God by failing to scatter throughout the earth. The great sin of the builders of the city of Babylon and its tower was evil, which is independence of God and originated with Satan in eternity past. It was their lack of trust in Him and their desire to find fulfillment, security, significance and immortality apart from Him that displeased God!

Genesis 11:3-4 records the independent attitude of these temple-tower and city builders.

Genesis 11:3

“They said to one another, ‘Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.’ And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar.”

Genesis 11:4

“They said, ‘Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

What the people are saying has a familiar ring to it. The phrase “let us” echoes the five “I wills” of Satan in eternity past that are recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14.

Isaiah 14:12-14

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations!”

“But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars

of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north.”

“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.”

Though he is not specifically mentioned in Genesis 11:1-9, Satan is the invisible enemy of God who is behind the scenes instigating and inspiring this attempt by the entire human race to live independently of God forming a one world government in opposition to Him.

Ephesians 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Revelation 12:9, “And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.”

1 John 5:19, “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

As we have noted, Nimrod, who was a descendant of Ham, was leading this rebellion at the Tower of Babel. Evidently, Satan sought to capitalize upon the character flaw in the Hamites, which was first manifested in their father Ham. This character in Him is recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 where he failed to cover up his father, Noah’s nakedness and instead told his brothers, which was an act of rebellion against his father’s authority.

This act of rebellion resulted in Noah cursing Ham’s youngest son Canaan. So Satan had a foothold with the descendants of Ham and in particular with Nimrod whom he had devoured like a roaring lion. Satan was attempting to unify the entire human race under one government opposed to and independent of God led by a man that is inspired by himself.

As we will see, Satan failed in this attempt but he will succeed with antichrist during the Tribulation period. God wants the human race to be unified in depending upon and worshipping Him rather than independent of Him and worshipping the creature

or creation, which the Tower of Babel was designed for this idolatrous purpose.

As we also noted in Genesis 10, Nimrod is a type of Antichrist meaning he foreshadows the “**man of lawlessness**” who will rule over a ten-nation confederacy constituting a Revived Roman Empire that will be destroyed by Jesus Christ at His 2nd Advent.

The building of the city of Babylon and the Tower of Babel was an attempt to establish a one-world government or empire that was under one man, Nimrod, with a state religion and this foreshadows the one-world government and state religion that will be under Antichrist during the Tribulation. Therefore, the builders of the city of Babylon and its tower were people who did not trust in God and sought to live independently of Him.

So they were saying in effect by building this city and tower that “God we don’t trust, nor do we need you, we will go it alone without You and set up a government, with our religion and our own ruler to lead us.”

By building the Tower of Babel, the human race was seeking to find significance, security, and fulfillment apart from God. Thus, if the Lord did not confuse the universal language of the human race, which resulted in the division of the human race geographically, then they would not have seen their need for Him and the security and fulfillment that only He can provide.

These postdiluvian city builders in Genesis 11:1-4 pick up where antediluvian city builders led by Cain in Genesis 4:17 left off. Both build a city to establish security and a meaningful existence independent of God according to a comparison of Genesis 4:17 and 11:4.

Genesis 11:5-6 deals with the Lord’s assessment of the situation at the Tower of Babel where Nimrod was leading a rebellion against God by forming a one-world government and state religion that was symbolized by the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:5

“The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built.”

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is pronounced ye-ho-vaw and is the

personal name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men whereas *Elohim*, “**God**” emphasizes the transcendent character of God.

Because the ancient Hebrews wrote only consonants, not vowels, the pronunciation of words and names was passed down by the parents to the children. Throughout Old Testament times people used the name *Yahweh* freely.

When the rabbis began to add their traditions about 300 B.C. they noted that the Third Commandment forbids misusing the name of *Yahweh* (Ex. 20:7). Therefore, they decided it was too holy to pronounce so they quit pronouncing the name.

Whenever they came to the name (*YHWH*), (sometimes called the Sacred Tetragrammaton) in Scripture, they read ‘*adon*, “**Lord**.”

In time, everyone forgot how to pronounce the name. In the sixth and seventh centuries after Christ, Jewish scholars of tradition (Masoretes) added vowel marks to the Hebrew Bibles to help them remember the traditional pronunciation.

Wherever they came to *YHWH*, they put vowel marks to remind them to read ‘*adon*, “**Lord**” unless the verse had ‘*adon YHWH*. Then they put vowel marks to remind them to read ‘*elohim*, “**God**.” Later, some European scholars wrote *JHVH* instead of *YHWH*. Then about 1220 A.D. some of them took the vowels for “**Lord**” (modified by Hebrew grammatical rules) and put them with *JHVH* to come up with *Jehovah*, which is not a real name, for it has the consonants of a proper name and the vowels of a title.

Therefore, in Genesis 11:5, we have the term *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” employed by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in order to emphasize God’s concern for the human race and that He intervenes in the affairs of men on planet earth.

The phrase “**the Lord came down to see**” is an “anthropopathism” where the human action of seeing is ascribed to God who is omniscient and omnipresent in order to appeal to our human frame of reference and to teach us about God’s concern

for and involvement with and intervention in the affairs of men.

The human action of seeing is ascribed to the Lord even though deity doesn't possess sight in order to convey the Lord's attitude towards the human race who are rebelling against Him in building the Tower of Babel in terms that the reader can understand. The Lord knew that the human race was united in building the city of Babylon and its tower in rebellion against Him since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history.

Therefore, the Lord was not finding out for the first time about the Tower of Babel rebellion rather the phrase "**the Lord came down to see**" is an anthropathism speaking of the "immanency" of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men.

The phrase "**the Lord came down to see**" is "not" a theophany, which is a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God since we don't have the Lord manifesting Himself to members of the human race but rather it is an anthropathism emphasizing that God's intervenes in the affairs of the human race.

The phrase "**the sons of men**" is the Hebrew expression *b^en^e ha'adham*, "the sons of Adam" emphasizes that the human race though united in one purpose in rebelling against God, were creatures whose biological life was composed of the dust of the ground (Gen. 2:7; 3:19; 6:2) and were nothing but frail, weak mortals. Thus, the fact that this unified rebellion of human beings attempted to deify themselves and live independently of God did not cause Him to feel threatened in any since He knew of course that His creatures are composed of soul life and biological life, the latter of which is frail and weak and temporal.

Instead of God allowing the rebellion of men to take its course as He did the case of the antediluvians, God intervenes and takes the situation in hand and would prevent the rebellion to take its course. He would do this by confusing

the universal language of the human race into a multiplicity of languages.

Eventually, during the "Tribulation" period under Antichrist, God will allow the rebellion of the human race to take its course and allow them to be unified in rebelling against Him.

Normally, the Lord allows mankind and the nations to pursue life independently of Him without interference from Him. But there have been a few occasions in which the purposes of God for mankind are so endangered that it was required of God to intervene in the affairs of men and not allow the human race to suffer the consequences of their independence from Him, which is called the "overruling" will of God.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. Human beings and angels have a volition that is free to choose to obey God's will or reject it. Many things occur as a result of angelic and human free will acting contrary to God's desires.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to the sovereign will of God and without compromising the justice of God.

The sovereign will of God deals with the function of human and angelic volition in three ways: (1) God's directive will: What God desires of us. (2) God's permissive will: God allows us to have our own way. (3) God's overruling will: God will not let our negative decisions toward His will have their intended results-in order to protect us from our own negative volition and to preserve and perpetuate His own marvelous plan.

These three categories of divine will describe the manner in which God's sovereignty controls history and deals with the function of human and angelic volition. Therefore, in Genesis 11:5-9 we see the "overruling" will of God in action where God does "not" allow this rebellion of the human race at the Tower of Babel to have its intended results in order to protect the human race from their own bad decisions and to preserve and perpetuate His own plan for the human race.

In Genesis 6, Satan attempted to prevent the incarnation of the Son of God taking place and so God intervened by destroying the human race and the Nephilim (half men, half angel) except for Noah and his family.

In Genesis 11, through Nimrod, Satan attempted to unify the human race in rebelling against God and preventing His kingdom from being realized on the earth and thus in effect, dethroning God as sovereign ruler over the earth and so as a result God intervened.

In Genesis 6-9, we saw that Satan failed in his attempt to prevent the incarnation of the Son of God because God intervened and destroyed the earth's inhabitants with the great Flood but here in Genesis 11:1-9 we see Satan attempting to prevent the kingdom of God on earth and thus the millennial reign of Christ. It appears that Satan saw at that particular time in history, that he could not prevent the incarnation of the Son of God and so he attempted to prevent the reign of the incarnate Son of God from taking place by having the entire human race united in one purpose in building an autonomous, humanistic society that is totally and completely independent of God.

Satan was in effect saying, "if I can't prevent the incarnation of the Son of God, then I'll will prevent Him from having any subjects on the earth."

"**Had built**" is the verb *banah* (חנ*ב*), which is in the perfect ("persistent [present] perfective") tense representing that the building of the Tower of Babel started in the past but continued or persisted up to the time the Lord intervened.

Genesis 11:6

"The LORD said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them.'"

The Lord's first statement "**they are one people**" emphasizes the unity and common purpose that the human race had in attempting to establish a society that was totally and completely independent of Him.

The Lord's second statement "**they all have the same language**" emphasizes that the common language of the human race is the "source" of their unity and strength and which unity and strength is symbolized by the Tower of Babel.

Henry M. Morris, "The problem in the Lord's own judgment, lay in the *unity* of the people, a unity which was made possible only by a common language" (The Genesis Record, page 273).

The Lord's third statement "**and this is what they began to do and now nothing, which they purpose to do will be impossible for them**" also indicates that this was only the beginning of the human race's rebellion and defiance of Him and that through Nimrod they had access to demonic powers.

The fact that nothing would be impossible for these rebellious tower builders indicates that Nimrod, who led this rebellion, was more than likely indwelt by the devil or at least inspired by the devil and would therefore have access to his powers.

This might lead to a repeat of the conditions during the antediluvian period and God was not going to let this happen. If not indwelt by the devil, Nimrod was definitely inspired by the devil to instigate this rebellion against God. More than likely, Satan offered to Nimrod the rulership of the earth as he did with Christ in Matthew 4 and unlike Christ, he accepted.

Ultimately, during the Tribulation period, Antichrist will be used by the devil to rebel against Jesus Christ and to prevent Him from establishing His millennial reign on planet earth. Satan's purpose for Nimrod was to lead this rebellion of the human race against God.

The Lord's third statement "**and this is what they began to do and now nothing, which they purpose to do will be impossible for them**" indicates that the entire human race is unrighteous (Rm. 3:10) and fallen short of the glory of God (Rm. 3:22) and desperately wicked (Jer. 17:9).

Romans 3:10, "as it is written, 'THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE.'"

Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Jeremiah 17:9, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?”

The fact that the entire human race possesses the sinful nature of the first Adam and is enslaved to Satan coupled with them possessing a common language can only lead to the entire human race living independently and in rebellion against God, thus nothing in the way of evil would be impossible for the people.

The Lord exposes the sin and evil of the builders of the Tower of Babel and now the Lord will act upon them in judgment.

Genesis 11:7 records the Lord intervening at the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:7

“Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.”

“Us” is a reference to the Trinity, which is a technical theological term, which describes God as being one in essence, but three coequal, coinfinite, and coeternal Persons, who are God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The statement **“Come, let Us”** expresses the unity of purpose between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit and indicates that They are mocking the councils of Nimrod and the human race and their unified purpose to establish a independent society apart from Them.

Psalms 2:1-6

“Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?”

“The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’”

“He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them.”

“Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’”

The human race was unified in purpose as indicated in Genesis 11:3-4.

Now in Genesis 11:7 in contrast to the unity of purpose of the human race in rebelling against God, we have the unity of purpose among the members of the Trinity in dispersing this rebellion.

Basic to everything that these rebellious tower builders led by Nimrod were doing was their ability to communicate with one another, therefore, the Lord took away this ability to communicate with one another so that they could not understand one another and devise their wicked plans against Him.

Bruce Waltke, “The absence of a common language leads to the lack of a common understanding, which terminates the project” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 181).

People who cannot understand each other have difficulty trying to work together. The confounding of the language hindered the proliferation of evil on the earth.

Evil is a system of thinking that originated with Satan and the essence of which is independence from God.

A common language produces a common understanding, couple this with the fact that the entire human race is enslaved to sin and Satan, the proliferation of evil among members of the human race would be rapid and go unhindered, thus preventing a knowledge of God from being disseminated among members of the human race resulting in the certain destruction of the human race.

Unless God intervenes and divides the human race by confounding or confusing their speech, nothing will stop them in their excessive pride and self-confidence and desire for independence from God. They will cross the boundaries that God has established for them.

We see that the builders of the Tower of Babel led by Nimrod are involved in megalomania, wanting to be like God, thus imitating Satan but we also see that they live in fear of being separated from one another and having to be lonely and vulnerable and having to live without the safety and security of each other.

The megalomania of the human race has produced Hitler and Stalin and two world wars, which killed over fifty million people. The fear of the human race has produced insecure, selfish and restless people involved in sexual and drug addictions, alcoholism, suicides and general unhappiness. The United Nations is simply an expression of this megalomania and fear. Therefore, the confusion of the universal language of the human race at the Tower of Babel was for the good of the human race since a society involved in evil meaning living apart from God is totally unstable and self-destructive.

In fact, for the individual to live independently of God leads to self-centeredness and consuming and coveting what one's neighbor has resulting in the destruction of society.

The United Nations can never cure the ills of the world nor can it bring in peace and is thus condemned to failure. Only God can cure the ills of the world, which is sin and this He did by crucifying the sin nature at the Cross.

Romans 6:10, "For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God."

Romans 8:3, "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh."

Only Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace can bring true and lasting peace to this world (Eph. 2:14).

"Go down" expresses the Trinity's desire to intervene in the affairs of the human race in order to disrupt the proliferation of evil among them, which would lead to their certain destruction, thus the intervention of God in the Tower of Babel rebellion was an act of mercy on behalf of the human race. Therefore, we see in Genesis 11:7 that "divine determination counters human resolve" (Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament, page 52).

"Confuse" is the verb *balal* (בָּלַל) (baw-lal), which means, "to confuse" or "confound" in the sense of to mix or mingle and is used of God lampooning or parodying the name Babel, which means, "gate or residence of the gods."

God is making fun of the efforts of the human race to make a name for themselves by the building of this temple-tower.

Bruce Waltke, "The builders of this temple-tower think it reaches into heaven but it is so low that the Lord has to descend from heaven just to see it" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 178).

By confusing the universal language of the human race so that they don't understand each other, the Lord is dealing with heart of the problem at the Tower of Babel, which is the "source" of their unity and strength and which unity and strength is symbolized by the Tower of Babel. Their unity was made possible only by a common language.

In Genesis 11:1-7, we see that the human race has abused the gift of language, which was given to Adam by God in order that he might express his the authority over the earth that God had delegated to him.

Language was given to man to reflect the fact that he was created in the image of God and was to be the means by which he expressed the delegated authority that God had given to him to rule over the works of God's hands. But we see in Genesis 11:1-7, the human race does not use the gift of language to fulfill the purpose for which they were created by Him but rather they use it to establish a rival kingdom to God's.

God judges their rebellion by confusing their universal language into a multiplicity of languages and forcing the human race to separate from each other. The result of this has been catastrophic destruction and not dominion as nations independent of God have gone to war against one another.

Nations go to war against one another because they first of all, seek to live independently of God and secondly, because they do not understand each other and thirdly, because they are inherently selfish in their pursuit to have dominion over each other.

All of this was reversed on the day of Pentecost in June of 30 A.D. On the day of Pentecost, the Baptism of the Spirit took place for the first time in history. The Baptism of the Spirit takes place exclusively during the dispensation of the church age and is accomplished at the moment of

salvation when the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit places the believer in an eternal union with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

The Baptism of the Spirit identifies the believer positionally with Christ in His crucifixion (Gal. 2:20; Rom. 6:6), death (Rom. 6:3-5, Col. 2:20; 3:3), burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), resurrection (Rom. 6:4, 9; 7:4; Col. 2:12; 3:1) and session (Eph. 2:6).

Also, on the day of Pentecost, the omnipotence of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles the ability to speak a foreign language that they were not trained in so that they might proclaim the gospel to the Jews who spoke different languages and were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire (Acts 2). On that day, the Spirit did not remove the diversity of languages among the people but rather He allowed regenerate people to hear and understand one another.

The Spirit altered the effects of their diversity of language from destroying the community to building a new community, the church. The Holy Spirit gives us understanding and peace and without Him guiding us the result is fear, distrust of one another and selfish ambition and megalomania.

The Tower of Babel reveals that mankind cannot produce a unity that is beneficial to themselves or can fulfill the purpose for which God has created them. Where man has failed to achieve unity through his own devices, God has accomplished in the church through the Baptism of the Spirit.

The church experiences unity that the Holy Spirit has accomplished by operating in the love of God.

Colossians 3:14, “Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

This means that in order for believers to experience unity with each other they must obey the Lord’s command in John 13:34 to love one another as He has loved the church. Love for others is motivated by our love for the Lord and our love for the Lord is demonstrated by our

obedience to His commands to love one another and our obedience to His commands is the response in our souls to the love, which He demonstrated on behalf of us through the death, resurrection and session of Jesus Christ.

In order for the believer to love his fellow believer as Christ loved the church, the believer must accept by faith the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s self-sacrificial love and service for him, and which faith expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved him.

Romans 5:5, “and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”

1 John 4:16, “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

Genesis 11:8-9 records for us the results of divine intervention at the Tower of Babel.

Genesis 11:8

“So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.”

A comparison of Genesis 11:7-8 clearly indicates that the nations of the earth with their vast diversity of languages and cultures are the direct result of God intervening at the Tower of Babel and confusing the universal language of the human race.

Genesis 10 records the result of this divine intervention at the Tower of Babel. Instead of being centralized in one location, the human race is scattered or dispersed throughout the entire earth as a result of this divine intervention at the Tower of Babel.

“**Scattered**” is the verb *puts* (JWP) (poots), which expresses the concept of dispersion, moving from an area of high concentration to an area of low concentration, thus indicating that the Tower of Babel in Iraq went from being an area where there was high concentration of members of the human race to an area where there was a low concentration of them.

Instead of being centrally located in Babylon in Iraq, the human race was through this miracle dispersed throughout the entire earth.

The hiphil stem of the verb *puts* is a “causative” stem indicating that the omnipotence of the Lord is the “Cause” for the dispersion of the nations throughout the entire earth and the diversity of languages and cultures among them. Therefore, the building of the city of Babylon was brought to a complete halt because people could no longer understand each other.

The scene in the city of Babylon that day must have been comical with workman getting into arguments with each other because they thought their fellow workers were mocking them when they know longer could understand what each other was saying.

Imagine, the frustration of foremen of the various work crews when their subordinates could not understand their orders and consequently, could not carry them out. Nimrod would find it impossible to get his servants to carry out his commands. Chaos reigned throughout the palace in the city streets. Only in the homes, was their peace since each family could still understand each other and we know this since God does not destroy the institutions, which He has established such as the family!

Eventually, each family moved away from each other, leaving the city unfinished. The process of migration throughout the earth would be rapid where the entire world would be inhabited within a few generations.

Henry M. Morris, “As each family and tribal unit migrated away from Babel, not only did they each develop a distinctive culture, but also they each developed distinctive physical and biological characteristics. Since they could communicate only with members of their own family unit, there was no further possibility of marrying outside the family. Hence, it was necessary to establish new families composed of very close relatives, for several generations at least.

“It is well established genetically that variations take place very quickly in a small inbreeding population, but only very slowly in a large interbreeding population. In the latter, only the

dominant genes will find common expression in the outward physical characteristics of the population, reflecting more or less average characteristics even though the genetic factors for specifically distinctive characteristics are latent in the gene pool of the population. In a small population, however, the particular suite of genes that may be present in its members, though recessive in the larger population, will have opportunity to become openly expressed and even dominant under these circumstances.

“Thus, in a very few generations of such inbreeding, distinctive characteristics of skin color, height, hair texture, facial features, temperament, environmental adjustment, and others, could come to be associated with particular tribes and nations. Since earth’s population was still relatively young and since, before the Flood, there had been a minimum of environmental radiations to produce genetic mutations, there was as yet no genetic danger from inbreeding. After many further centuries had elapsed, however, the accumulation of mutations and the associated danger of congenital defects had become sufficiently serious to cause God to declare incestuous marriages illegal (Lev. 18:6-14)” (The Genesis Record, page 276).

Eventually, as time went on, people could learn each other’s languages.

Henry M. Morris, “The confounding of languages applied only to the phonologies, not to the underlying thought processes which are part of man’s uniqueness” (The Genesis Record, page 276).

Therefore, mankind retained his uniqueness but now was divided into a multiplicity of nations and languages and cultures.

Obviously, the Lord’s omnipotence was the cause for this confounding of the languages and was therefore a miracle. During the millennial reign of Christ, the nations will be united in worshipping the Lord (Micah 4:2; Zech. 14:9, 16-19).

Genesis 11:9

“Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD

scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth.”

The city referred is Babylon. Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is parodying the Akkadian *bab-ilu* meaning “gate of god,” with its Hebrew phonological equivalent *babel*, meaning “confusion.”

“**Babel**” is located in modern Iraq, about twenty miles south of Baghdad, near the modern city of Hilla, on the Euphrates River, south of where the Tigris and Euphrates approach.

“**Confused**” is the verb *balal* (𐤁𐤀𐤁𐤀) (baw-lal), which means, “to confuse” or “confound” in the sense of to mix or mingle and is used of God lampooning or parodying the name Babel, which means, “gate or residence of the gods.”

As we noted earlier in our study of Genesis 11, the name “Babel” has no connection with the Hebrew *balal*, “He confused” and its meaning is in fact patent in its Assyrian form, *Bab-ili*, “gate of god.” The final syllable, *el* in Hebrew, is common to all Semitic languages and means, “god” while *bab* is well-known in Assyrian, Arabic, Aramaic and late Hebrew.

In Genesis 11:9, Moses is indulging in a play on words, meaning a verbal irony. Babel, therefore, became a synonym for the confusion caused by the language barriers, which God imposed on the human race because of their pride and arrogance in attempting to establish a one-world government and state religion that would honor mankind rather than God and would be independent of Him.

The phrase “because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of the whole earth” gives us the “reason” for the division of the nations and multiple languages and dialects and cultures that were in the world in the day of Moses and Israel, which continue today in our day and age.

The building of the city stopped with the establishment of multiple languages, which led to the departure of her inhabitants but when the population increased again, the building of the city continued, with the result that Babylon ultimately became the greatest city in the ancient world.

Ever since, the Lord intervened at the Tower of Babel, Babylon has been a source and center of confusion in the world in the sense that the complex religious system established there by Nimrod and his wife was carried into all the nations by those who were dispersed from the city. It appears that at least one member of each family had been indoctrinated into the Babylonian religion and these eventually became the spiritual leaders in each heathen family. Thus, the Babylonian religion with its occupation with the occult and astrology and polytheistic pantheism was established throughout the entire ancient world.

Henry M. Morris, “The Babylonian pantheon, with its array of heavenly gods and goddesses, was equivalent to the corresponding pantheon in Assyria, Egypt, Greece, India and others. All followed the astrological emblems of the zodiac and all were idolaters. Furthermore, every one of these religious systems in one way or another communed with the evil spirits who were associated with the idols” (The Genesis Record, page 278).

But even though the world’s inhabitants were immersed in this Satanically inspired Babylonian religion, God had put in each one of them an awareness of the true and living God and Creator (Jn. 1:3; Rm. 1:18-32).

Romans 1:18-32

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

“because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

“Professing to be wise, they became fools.”

“and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.”

“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural.”

“and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

“being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips.”

“slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.”

“without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

“and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

The Two Babylons

There are two Babylons mentioned in Scripture, one refers to the ancient Babylon of the Old Testament and the Babylon of the future is spoken of in the New Testament. The Babylon of the Old

Testament was established by Nimrod according to Genesis 11:1-9.

“**Babel**” is also called “Babylon” in Scripture was located in modern Iraq, about twenty miles south of Baghdad, near the modern city of Hilla, on the Euphrates River, south of where the Tigris and Euphrates approach and is called “Babylon” in the Scriptures as well.

Babel became a synonym for the confusion caused by the language barriers, which God imposed on the human race because of their pride and arrogance in attempting to establish a one-world government and state religion that would honor mankind rather than God and would be independent of Him.

The building of the city stopped with the establishment of multiple languages, which led to the departure of her inhabitants but when the population increased again, the building of the city continued, with the result that Babylon ultimately became the greatest city in the ancient world.

Ever since, the Lord intervened at the Tower of Babel, Babylon has been a source and center of confusion in the world in the sense that the complex religious system established there by Nimrod and his wife was carried into all the nations by those who were dispersed from the city.

Babel was the seat of Satan’s ancient counterfeit strategy to destroy and corrupt the knowledge of God as well as God’s plan of salvation as anticipated in Genesis 3:15. This was accomplished by Nimrod’s political, commercial, and international system as demonstrated in the tower of Babel and by the mother-child cult instituted by Nimrod’s wife, Semiramis.

History shows us this system has never ceased to exist in one form or another and will exist in a revived form in the Tribulation as never before (Rev. 17 and 18).

Babylon has become the biblical name and symbol for the world-wide religious system, which has touched all the nations of the world to some degree or another and is called the “**Mother of Harlots**” (Rev. 17:5).

Revelation 17:1-5

“Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and spoke with me, saying, ‘Come here, I will show you the judgment of the great harlot who sits on many waters.’”

“with whom the kings of the earth committed acts of immorality, and those who dwell on the earth were made drunk with the wine of her immorality.”

“And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns.”

“The woman was clothed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality.”

“and on her forehead a name was written, a mystery, ‘BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.’”

Babylon’s greatest glory was during the time of Nebuchadnezzar 600 years before Christ. Cyrus the Mede captured the city from the Chaldeans, Alexander the Great in turn captured it from Medo-Persia, and both made it their capitol. From this you can see its importance to the Gentile world powers and how it stands in opposition to Jerusalem and the purposes of God.

Important to the study of Babylon and its origin is the origin of its religion and idolatry, which spread from Babylon to surrounding nations and beyond. Ancient records indicate that Nimrod had a wife named Semiramis who was the founder and first high priestess of the Babylonian mystery religion. She gave birth to a son named Tammuz, whom she claimed was conceived miraculously. This son was considered savior of his people and in effect was the first false Messiah—a counterfeit of Genesis 3:15 and God’s promise of a Savior. The son was to have been killed by a wild beast, but brought back to life.

The religious system of Semiramis had many secret rites in the worship of its idols, which were called mysteries (secrets) into which new members had to be initiated. When the initiates were

initiated they were given a cup containing a mysterious drink made of wine, honey, water and flour, which represented the doctrines of the cult, but these also made the participant intoxicated and prepared for what the participant was about to see, hear and do.

These rites involved consecrated male and female prostitution and the most sordid sexual immorality carried out in connection with its idolatrous worship. The fornication is both physical and spiritual (Rev. 17:2-5). The rites incorporated the worship of the mother (who was called “the queen of heaven”) and the child. While the rites varied, and the idol images often varied from country to country as the cult spread from one location to another, they all contained one central feature, the worship of the goddess mother and her child.

Often the names changed, but no matter where you went, pictures and images of a mother with a child in her arms were found. The religious system, which began in Babel (or Babylon), became the mother, the source of all pagan religions of the world. This is the reason she is called “**Mother of Harlots**” (Rev. 17:5).

This system spread to Greece, Egypt, Italy, Phoenicia, Israel, India, Asia Minor and Europe. Canaan was full of this iniquity and is one of the reasons God commanded Israel to destroy its inhabitants. Their failure to do so led to Israel’s own downfall and involvement with the Babylonian system.

It is important to understand that Babylon refers to more than a city in Revelation 17 and 18. It stands for a system of evil, religiously and politically.

Americans speak of “Wall Street” and “Madison Avenue.” These are actually streets, but they also stand for the center of the financial and advertising enterprises of this country.

Revelation 17 describes the apostate religious system as it will come to its zenith in the first half of the Tribulation, but the Ten Nation Confederation in the middle of the Tribulation will destroy it. The true church will have been raptured, but the apostate and false religious systems continue on and become united under the one world system of Babylon, which may well be headed up by Rome.

Revelation 17:6-18

"And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly."

"And the angel said to me, 'Why do you wonder? I will tell you the mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns.'"

"The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to come up out of the abyss and go to destruction. And those who dwell on the earth, whose name has not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, will wonder when they see the beast, that he was and is not and will come."

"Here is the mind which has wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits."

"and they are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; and when he comes, he must remain a little while."

"The beast which was and is not, is himself also an eighth and is one of the seven, and he goes to destruction."

"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but they receive authority as kings with the beast for one hour."

"These have one purpose, and they give their power and authority to the beast."

"These will wage war against the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful."

"And he said to me, 'The waters which you saw where the harlot sits, are peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues.'"

"And the ten horns which you saw, and the beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her desolate and naked, and will eat her flesh and will burn her up with fire."

"For God has put it in their hearts to execute His purpose by having a common purpose, and by giving their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled."

"The woman whom you saw is the great city, which reigns over the kings of the earth."

Revelation 18 predicts the destruction of Babylon will be final and complete and will be destroyed with fire from heaven as God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Rev. 18:18; 16:17-21).

Revelation 18:1-24

"After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his glory."

"And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.'"

"For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the passion of her immorality, and the kings of the earth have committed acts of immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich by the wealth of her sensuality."

"I heard another voice from heaven, saying, 'Come out of her, my people, so that you will not participate in her sins and receive of her plagues.'"

"For her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

"Pay her back even as she has paid, and give back to her double according to her deeds; in the cup which she has mixed, mix twice as much for her."

"To the degree that she glorified herself and lived sensuously, to the same degree give her torment and mourning; for she says in her heart, 'I SIT AS A QUEEN AND I AM NOT A WIDOW, and will never see mourning.'"

"For this reason in one day her plagues will come, pestilence and mourning and famine, and she will be burned up with fire; for the Lord God who judges her is strong."

“And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning.”

“standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come.’”

“And the merchants of the earth weep and mourn over her, because no one buys their cargoes any more.”

“cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and scarlet, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble.”

“and cinnamon and spice and incense and perfume and frankincense and wine and olive oil and fine flour and wheat and cattle and sheep, and cargoes of horses and chariots and slaves and human lives.”

“The fruit you long for has gone from you, and all things that were luxurious and splendid have passed away from you and men will no longer find them.”

“The merchants of these things, who became rich from her, will stand at a distance because of the fear of her torment, weeping and mourning.”

“saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls.’”

“for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste! And every shipmaster and every passenger and sailor, and as many as make their living by the sea, stood at a distance.”

“and were crying out as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What city is like the great city?’”

“And they threw dust on their heads and were crying out, weeping and mourning, saying, ‘Woe, woe, the great city, in which all who had

ships at sea became rich by her wealth, for in one hour she has been laid waste!’”

“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you saints and apostles and prophets, because God has pronounced judgment for you against her.”

“Then a strong angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, ‘So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer.’”

“And the sound of harpists and musicians and flute-players and trumpeters will not be heard in you any longer; and no craftsman of any craft will be found in you any longer; and the sound of a mill will not be heard in you any longer.”

“and the light of a lamp will not shine in you any longer; and the voice of the bridegroom and bride will not be heard in you any longer; for your merchants were the great men of the earth, because all the nations were deceived by your sorcery.”

“And in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all who have been slain on the earth.”

A literal interpretation of Zechariah 5:5-11 demands a restored and rebuilt Babylon.

Zechariah 5:1-11

“Then I lifted up my eyes again and looked, and behold, there was a flying scroll.”

“And he said to me, ‘What do you see?’ And I answered, ‘I see a flying scroll; its length is twenty cubits and its width ten cubits.’”

“Then he said to me, ‘This is the curse that is going forth over the face of the whole land; surely everyone who steals will be purged away according to the writing on one side, and everyone who swears will be purged away according to the writing on the other side.’”

“I will make it go forth, declares the LORD of hosts, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name; and it will spend the night within

that house and consume it with its timber and stones.”

“Then the angel who was speaking with me went out and said to me, ‘Lift up now your eyes and see what this is going forth.’”

“I said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘This is the ephah going forth.’ Again he said, ‘This is their appearance in all the land.’”

“(and behold, a lead cover was lifted up); and this is a woman sitting inside the ephah.”

“Then he said, ‘This is Wickedness!’ And he threw her down into the middle of the ephah and cast the lead weight on its opening.”

“Then I lifted up my eyes and looked, and there two women were coming out with the wind in their wings; and they had wings like the wings of a stork, and they lifted up the ephah between the earth and the heavens.”

“I said to the angel who was speaking with me, ‘Where are they taking the ephah?’”

“Then he said to me, ‘To build a temple for her in the land of Shinar; and when it is prepared, she will be set there on her own pedestal.’”

An ephah to a Jew was a perfect symbol of commerce and was the largest dry measure of the Jews. The ephah is then borne away by two women with wings of a stork **“to build for it an house in the land of Shinar”** (the land of Babylon).

This vision anticipates a final concentration of wickedness and commercialism in a great center in the land of Shinar (Babylon), which would reach out over the whole earth. This is the exact portrayal of Babylon as seen in Revelation 18.

The historical situation concerning Babylon shows much of the prophecies mentioned above have not been fulfilled and must await a final and complete fulfillment. When the Medes and Persians conquered the city they came suddenly and gained immediate control, but they did not destroy the city but instead Cyrus the Mede beautified the city in 540 B.C.

Hundreds of years later many Jews still lived at Babylon and a Jewish Talmud actually originated from there and by the twelfth century A.D.

Babylon had grown and several mosques had been erected. Later a city by the name of Hillah was built there and in 1900 it had a population of ten thousand.

The land around Babylon is fertile today and dates are grown in abundance (Isa. 13:21f). Other cities around the area of Babylon were built from the ruins of ancient Babylon and in fact the city of Hillah was built entirely from the ruins of Babylon. Bricks with the word “Babylon” stamped on them have been found as far away as Baghdad. It is obvious from this historical information that the city was not destroyed suddenly or completely.

Instead, it continued to be inhabited after it was conquered and the land around her did not become desolate, but continued to be populated and fertile. This is a fact of history. Her ruins were used in building other cities and there was no disturbance in the sun or moon, nor did universal peace follow.

The Word of God is true and these prophecies still await a future fulfillment. The description of Babylon’s destruction in Revelation 18 declares it will be destroyed suddenly (**“in one day her plagues will come”** [vs. 8]; **“for in one hour such great wealth has been laid waste”** [vs. 17]).

The destruction will be complete and final, **“it shall be found no more at all”** (Jer. 51:63-64); **“So will Babylon, the great city, be thrown down with violence, and will not be found any longer”** (Rev. 18:21) and that universal peace will follow the destruction.

All of this coincides exactly with the prophecies of the Old Testament and shows that Babylon must be rebuilt in the Tribulation in order to be destroyed as prophesied in **“the Day of the Lord.”**

Rome may well be the religious Babylon of the world in the first half of the Tribulation, but I am convinced that Babylon on the Euphrates will be rebuilt and will be the political and commercial capitol in the last half of the Tribulation.

Genesis 11:10-26 presents the record of the descendants of Shem. This portion contains a ten-name linear genealogy forming the transition from the Flood to Abraham.

When I say “linear” I mean that this genealogy establishes continuity over stretches of time

without narrative to demonstrate the legitimacy of Abraham as the one whom the promised “Seed” Jesus Christ will come.

This genealogy reveals that the Promised “Seed” of Genesis 3:15 will come from the descendants of Shem.

Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

In Genesis 5, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth and in Genesis 9:24-27, Noah prophesied that Christ would come from the line of Shem.

Genesis 9:24-27

“When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him.”

“So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.’”

“He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.’”

“May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”

But now here in Genesis 11:10-26, the Holy Spirit gives us more information revealing that from the line of Shem, Abraham would bring blessing to all the families of the earth dispersed around the globe.

The genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26 concludes with the birth of Abraham the man of faith, who stands in contrast to an unbelieving world. This genealogy is a “Janus” book, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after.

The transition passages at the end of each *toledhoth* in Genesis 4:25-26, 6:1-8, 9:18-29 are Janus sections. Therefore, the genealogy in Genesis 11:10-26 looks back to the account of Noah and his sons in Genesis 6:9-9:29 mentioning the Flood in Genesis 11:10 and Shem who is mentioned in Genesis 9:27.

It also emphasizes the genealogy of Shem, to whom Noah prophesied that the Messiah would come from in Genesis 9:24-27 and it looks back to the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth in Genesis 10:1-11:9.

The genealogy of Genesis 11:10-26 also looks ahead by concluding with Terah and his family in Genesis 11:26, from which family, Abraham would be born into who would continue the line of Christ and bring blessing to the entire world. This linear genealogy of Shem overlaps with Shem’s segmented genealogy in Genesis 10:22-25 and they separate at the point of Eber’s sons Peleg and Joktan.

Genesis 10:22, “The sons of Shem were Elam (“eternity”) and Asshur (“happy, successful”) and Arpachshad (“he cursed the breast bottle”) and Lud (“firebrand, traveling”) and Aram (“highland”).”

Genesis 10:23, “The sons of Aram were Uz (“counsel”) and Hul (“circle”) and Gether (“fear”) and Mash (“drawn out”).”

Genesis 10:24, “Arpachshad became the father of Shelah (“sprout”); and Shelah became the father of Eber.”

Genesis 10:25, “Two sons were born to Eber; the name of the one was Peleg, (“division”) for in his days the earth was divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan (“smallness, insignificant”).”

Shem’s genealogy through Joktan in Genesis 10 was followed by the Lord judgment of the rebellion of the human race at the Tower of Babel but in Genesis 11:10-26, Shem’s genealogy ends with the promise of Abraham’s birth.

Bruce Waltke, “Shem in Hebrew means, “name” Ironically, the tower builders were seeking to “make a name” but have no names, and the city they built receives the shameful name “Confusion.” God gives the elect of Shem and everlasting name in this genealogy, and above all, He will exalt the name of the faithful descendant Abraham” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 187).

Genesis 11:10

“These are the records of the generations of Shem (“name, renown”). Shem was one

hundred years old, and became the father of Arpachshad (“he cursed the breast bottle”) two years after the flood.”

“**These are the records of the generations of Shem**” refers to the genealogy that follows in Genesis 11:10-26 and this is indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T), “**the records of the generations**” which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

The noun *toledhoth* appears ten times in the book of Genesis and is always used in a transitional sense as a heading or title for what is to follow and provides the outline or framework to the book of Genesis.

In Genesis 11:10, the noun *toledhoth* introduces the fifth section of the book of Genesis. First section contained the account of the line of the heavens and the earth-transition (2:4-4:26), the second section contained the account of Adam’s line (5:1-6:8), the third section contained the account of Noah’s line (6:9-9:29) and the fourth section contained the account of the line of Noah’s sons (10:1-11:9).

The phrase “**two years after the Flood**” presents to us the initial chronological setting linking Genesis 6:9-9:29 with Genesis 11:10-26. This phrase creates a chronological problem since according to Genesis 5:32, Noah was five hundred years old when he fathered his three sons and according to Genesis 7:6, he was six hundred years old at the time of the Flood.

If Shem were the firstborn, his son Arpachshad would have been born the year of the Flood, not two years later.

Leupold presents the solution, “The solution to the phrase is that according to Genesis 10:22, Shem had two other sons before Arpachshad, namely, Elam and Asshur. If then, these three children were born in rapid succession, it would not be a physical impossibility to have Arpachshad ‘begotten’ two years after the Flood” (Exposition of Genesis 1, H.C. Leupold, page 394).

“**Arpachshad**” was in the direct line leading to Abraham who according to Genesis 10:22 was the third son of Shem and Josephus claims that he was the ancestor of the Chaldeans (Antiquities of the Jews, book 1, chapter 6, paragraph 4).

He is mentioned here alone without his brothers since he was in the line of Christ and not his brothers according to Luke 3:36.

Genesis 11:11

“and Shem lived five hundred years after he became the father of Arpachshad, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:12

“Arpachshad lived thirty-five years, and became the father of Shelah (“sprout”).”

Nothing appears in secular sources concerning “**Shelah**” and nothing much is said about him in the Bible except that he was the father Eber who was the ancestor of the Hebrews through Peleg and thirteen Arabian tribes through Joktan.

Luke 3:36 inserts the name “Cainan” between “**Arpachshad**” and “**Shelah**” in this genealogy but this name is not mentioned in 1 Chronicles 1:18, nor is “Cainan” given as a son of “**Arpachshad**” in Genesis 10:24.

The name “Cainan” does not appear in any other ancient versions of the Old Testament, such as the Samaritan, or the Vulgate.

Furthermore, the copyists of the Old Testament were meticulous in maintaining the accuracy of their copies. Many of the copyists of many of the New Testament manuscripts were not as meticulous as those who copied the Old Testament manuscripts such as the Masorites.

Of course, a copyist’s error in no way takes away from the inerrancy of the Greek New Testament.

The name “Cainan” was inserted into Luke 3:36 because of a copyist error where the copyists inadvertently copied “Cainan” from Luke 3:37 as he was copying Luke 3:36, thus getting two Cainan’s into the list.

Genesis 11:13

“and Arpachshad lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Shelah, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:14

“Shelah lived thirty years, and became the father of Eber (“emigrants” or “to vanish to the region beyond”).”

Genesis 10:21 emphasizes that Shem is the ancestor of all the children of **“Eber”** because Abraham and the Israelites are identified as descendants of **“Eber,”** which would be important to Moses’ readers since they were descendants of Abraham and Israelites.

According to Genesis 10:24 and 11:14, **“Eber”** was the son of **“Shelah”** and his name means, “region beyond or over (the river)” indicating the land of Canaan that was beyond the Jordan River.

The term “Hebrew” is from “Eber” which anglicized *Heber* in Luke 3:35. Abraham was called a “Hebrew” according to Genesis 14:13 indicating that he was a descendant of Eber.

The most prominent branch of the Shemites were the **“sons of Eber,”** since Israel were descendants of Eber.

Genesis 11:15

“and Shelah lived four hundred and three years after he became the father of Eber, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:16

“Eber lived thirty-four years, and became the father of Peleg (“division”).”

Peleg’s name means, “division” and was thus named because of the Tower of Babel where the Lord geographically “divided” the human race as a result of confusing the universal language and vocabulary they used into many different languages and dialects and this event is recorded in Genesis 11:1-9.

Genesis 11:17

“and Eber lived four hundred and thirty years after he became the father of Peleg, and he had other sons and daughters.”

If we compare Genesis 5 and 11, we can see the patriarchal longevity began to decline immediately after the Flood. For example, Noah lived 950 years, 20 years more than Adam, but Shem lived only 600 years, Arpachshad 438 years, Shelah 433 years and Eber 464 years.

The reason for this decline in age was that the vast transparent water vapor canopy that was above the earth’s atmosphere in the antediluvian period dissipated during the Flood increasing both genetic and somatic mutations significantly. This water vapor canopy protected the antediluvians from harmful radiation from outer space and contributed greatly to the longevity of the antediluvians. Therefore, with this water vapor canopy gone, the post-diluvians did not live as long as the antediluvians.

Genesis 11:18

“Peleg lived thirty years, and became the father of Reu (reh-oo-“one exercising oversight as a shepherd or as a friend”).”

Archaeological evidence suggests that **“Reu”** settled in northern Mesopotamia since his name corresponds to later names of towns in the middle Euphrates Valley and we know the descendants of Peleg settled in this area.

Genesis 11:19

“and Peleg lived two hundred and nine years after he became the father of Reu, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:20

“Reu lived thirty-two years, and became the father of Serug (ser-oog-“branch”).”

“Serug” is an Akkadian place name located approximately forty-five miles west of Haran in Upper Mesopotamia.

Genesis 11:21

“and Reu lived two hundred and seven years after he became the father of Serug, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:22

“Serug lived thirty years, and became the father of Nahor (naw-khor-“snorting”).”

“Nahor” is also attested as a place name in Upper Mesopotamia.

Genesis 11:23

“and Serug lived two hundred years after he became the father of Nahor, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:24

“Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and became the father of Terah (the-rakh-“delay”).”

“**Terah**” is also a place name on the Balikh River near Haran. “**Terah**” was the father of Abraham and later settled in Haran where he died. The name *Terhah* is associated in literature with the moon-god, and some thus think there exists a direct etymological link between his name and the *teraphim*, that is, small idolatrous images that were kept in most households.

The fact that “**Terah**” was an idolater is confirmed by Joshua 24:2.

Joshua 24:2, “Joshua said to all the people, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, “From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.”

Genesis 11:25

“and Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years after he became the father of Terah, and he had other sons and daughters.”

Genesis 11:26, “Terah lived seventy years, and became the father of Abram (“exalted father”), Nahor and Haran (haw-rawn-“mountaineer”).”

Genesis 11:26 is a “segmented” genealogy meaning it displays depth and breadth forming a natural transition to the account of Terah’s descendants.

Terah waited seventy years before he became a father whereas his ancestors from Arpachshad to Nahor fathered their firstborn in their early thirties. Thus, Terah has to wait another forty years. The delay foreshadows Abraham who waited till he was a hundred years old before he had Isaac and Isaac waited till he was sixty before he had a child.

Also, the number seventy is significant since it represents a complete number revealing that God is sovereignly working out His purpose through Terah.

The name “**Abram**” means, “exalted father,” indicating that he had a noble lineage. His name later changed by the Lord to “Abraham,” which means, “father of a multitude.”

Abram’s brother “**Nahor**” was named after their grandfather and this is the only instance in all the genealogies of Genesis 5, 10 and 11 that we see someone being named after an ancestor indicating that they were a close knit family, which would indicate that it was difficult for Abram to leave his father when the Lord commanded him to (cf. Gen. 12:1; Heb. 11:8).

“**Haran**” was the youngest of his father’s sons according to Genesis 11:27 and was born at Ur of the Chaldees, and died there at a young age in the presence of his father according to Genesis 11:28 and was also the father of Lot according to Genesis 11:27.

Genesis 11:27-32 presents the record of the descendants of Terah and the birth of Abraham.

Genesis 11:27

“Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah (the-rakh-“delay”) became the father of Abram (“exalted father”), Nahor (naw-khor-“snorting”) and Haran (haw-rawn-“mountaineer”); and Haran became the father of Lot (“covering”).”

“**These are the records of the generations of Terah**” refers to the record of the descendants of Terah and in particular Abraham, which follows in Genesis 11:27-25:11 and this is indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T), “**the records of the generations**” which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

In Genesis 11:27, the noun *toledhoth* introduces the sixth section of the book of Genesis, which is completed in Genesis 25:11 and centers upon Abraham who is the most illustrious ancestor of the Promised “Seed” Jesus Christ.

This sixth section in the book of Genesis, which is contained Genesis 11:27-25:11 has three sections: (1) Introduction (11:27b-32) (2) Main body (12:1-22:19) (3) Transition to the next section of the book of Genesis and generation (22:20-25:11).

The introduction presents the principle characters in Genesis 11:27-25:11, namely, Abraham and Sarah. The main body develops their story with the testing of Abraham and the concluding section includes the presentation of securing a bride for Isaac with Abraham and Sarah’s deaths.

Genesis 12:1-22:19 presents Abraham's struggle to trust the Lord in the face of a series of adversities and personal failures.

"**Terah**" was the father of Abraham and later settled in Haran where he died.

As we noted earlier in our study of Genesis 11, the name *Terhah* is associated in literature with the moon-god, and some thus think there exists a direct etymological link between his name and the *teraphim*, that is, small idolatrous images that were kept in most households. We also noted earlier in our study that the fact that "**Terah**" was an idolater is confirmed by Joshua 24:2 and 14.

Joshua 24:2, "Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, "From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods."

The name "**Abram**" means, "exalted father," indicating that he had a noble lineage. His name later changed by the Lord to "Abraham," which means, "father of a multitude."

Abraham is called the "**father of all them that believe**" in Romans 4:11. Abraham was a man of faith and this he declared openly several times in his life and in Hebrews 11:8, Abraham is mentioned as the 4th member in God's Hall of Fame of Faith.

Hebrews 11:8-19

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise."

"for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

"By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised."

"Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE."

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

"For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own."

"And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return."

"But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son."

"it was he to whom it was said, 'IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.'"

"He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type."

Abraham is called in Scripture "**the friend of God.**"

James 2:23, "And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness,' and he was called the friend of God."

Abraham is also the recipient of a covenant promise from God as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-18, 15:6, 18-21, and 22:15-18.

"**Lot**" was the son of Haran and the nephew of Abram.

Genesis 11:28

"**Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.**"

The fact that Haran died in the presence of his father Terah left Lot an orphan and the childless Abram took care of him.

The location of “Ur” is Tell-el-Muqayyar on the Euphrates River in southern Iraq. Excavations of this site between 1922-34 yielded significant discoveries, including thousands of inscribed tablets and the ruins of a stepped temple tower known as a ziggurat. It was a thriving city in Sumerian times through the Old Babylonian period and was occupied to some degree through the Seleucid times, spanning the history of independent Mesopotamia.

Merrill F. Unger, “When Abram migrated, the city was idolatrous, given over to the worship of the moon deity Nannar and his consort Nin-Gal; a sacred area and ziggurat were devoted to this idolatry. Significantly, Nannar, the moon god, was also adored at Haran, to which Terah emigrated (cf. Josh. 24:2). It seems Abram’s own father was an idolater. From universal polytheism God called Abram as a purge to be an exponent of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith and the blessing of knowing and serving the one God, the Creator and Redeemer of man” (Unger’s Commentary of the Old Testament, page 54).

The “Chaldeans” entered southern Mesopotamia in the first millennium B.C. and became the rulers of this area in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. The ancestor of the Chaldeans was Chesed, the nephew of Abraham through his brother Nahor (Gen. 11:28, 31; 15:7; Neh. 9:7). The nation of Israel identified the Chaldeans as the Babylonians under the rule of Nebuchadnezzar and the city of Babylon was said to be the pride of the Chaldean people (Isa. 13:19).

Genesis 11:29

“Abram and Nahor took wives for themselves. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai (“princess”); and the name of Nahor's wife was Milcah (“queen”), the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah and Iscah (“the one who looks forth”).”

The phrase “to take a wife” is a technical Hebrew expression for getting married.

The name “Sarai” means, “princess” and suggests that rulers would come from her lineage and that

she was a woman of a measure of social standing. Her name was later changed to “Sarah” in the covenant ceremony that appears in Genesis 17:5.

Sarai was the daughter of Terah by a different mother than Abraham’s (20:12), therefore; she was the half-sister of Abraham.

Nahor married his niece, Milcah, daughter of Haran. Such incestuous relationships were later forbidden in the Mosaic Law.

Genesis 11:30

“Sarai was barren; she had no child.”

Sarah’s infertility drives the narrative of Genesis 11:27-25:11 since the promises of God are all meaningless apart from an heir being born. Her infertility also tests the faith of both Abraham and Sarah and her beauty drives the narrative since on two occasions, with Pharaoh and Abimelech, Abraham claims that Sarah is his sister rather than his wife in order to protect his life from the rulers of the lands in which he traveled.

She offers her slave Hagar to Abraham in order to solve their problem of being childless, which Abraham accepts producing Ishmael and the creation of a problem that exists with us today, the Arab and Israeli conflict.

Like Abraham, Sarah is mentioned as a hero of faith in Hebrews 11 since she trusted in the Lord to give her a child even though she was past the age of childbearing.

Genesis 11:31

“Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan; and they went as far as Haran, and settled there.”

Genesis 11:32

“The days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran.”

In Genesis 12:1 the Lord commanded Abraham to leave his father’s house and land, which was in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Genesis 12:1, “Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your

relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you.”

Hebrews 11:8 records that Abraham obeyed God but not knowing where he was going.

Hebrews 11:8, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

Acts 7:2-3 confirms Genesis 12:1.

Acts 7:2, 3

“And he said, ‘Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.’”

“and said to him, ‘LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.’”

Acts 7:4 confirms Hebrews 11:8 that Abraham obeyed the Lord.

Acts 7:4, “Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living.”

A comparison of Genesis 12:1, Hebrews 11:8 and Acts 7:4 indicates that Abraham did obey the Lord and leave Ur of the Chaldees but it wasn't until after his father died that God showed him exactly where he was going since Hebrews 11:8 records that the Lord told Abraham to leave his country but did not tell him where he was going to. We can infer that Abraham's father Terah came along with Abraham when he saw Abraham's intention to leave and then decided to stay in Haran, which was the center of the worship of the moon god.

Abraham's father Terah was an obstacle to the plan of God for Abraham and thus the Lord took Terah out of the way and Abraham moved on to Canaan, which the Lord had promised him.

Genesis 12

In Genesis 10-11, we saw that after the Flood, the descendants of Noah's three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth began to repopulate the earth but in their unbelief, rebelled against the Lord and under the

leadership of Nimrod began to establish a one-world government and state religion that was opposed to God. The bond that unified this rebellion was their universal language and the symbol of their independence from God was the Tower of Babel.

As we saw the Lord dispersed this rebellion by confounding their universal language into many languages and dialects, thus with nothing to unify them, the human race dispersed throughout the world. These nations were godless and only a few individuals such as Job and Melchizedek and others continued to worship the Lord and remain obedient to him. Yet, as we noted in our study of Genesis 10-11, God is not only the God of Israel but also the Gentiles and these Gentile nations spread throughout the earth were in need of a Savior. Thus, God calls a man named “Abram” (his name means, “exalted father”) and from him, God would build a nation called “Israel” and from this nation, the Savior, Jesus Christ would originate and from Him the Gentile heathen nations of the earth would be blessed with the gift of salvation through faith in Him.

With Abraham, God is going to build a new nation that would be responsible for carrying out God's revelation to other men and through whom the Redeemer could come into the world to execute the Father's plan of salvation and for this purpose, God chose Abram, a descendant of Shem and a son of Terah.

Genesis 12:1

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you.’”

“**Abram**” is the proper name *avram* (sr*b+a^), which means, “(The divine) Father is exalted.”

“**Go forth**” is the imperative form of the verb *halakh* (El^h*), “to leave” and the preposition *l'* (lamed of interest or ethical dative), “your benefit” and the 2nd person masculine singular pronomial suffix, “yourself,” thus it can be translated, “leave by yourself and for the benefit of yourself.”

Thus indicating that the command that the Lord issued to Abraham was not a sharp command but rather a gracious invitation and a call to separation

and isolation and disassociation from his idolatrous family members and countrymen.

The fact that Abraham's family were idolaters is confirmed in Joshua 24:2.

Joshua 24:2, "Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.'"

Idolatry originally meant the worship of idols, or the worship of false gods by means of idols, but came to mean among the Old Testament Hebrews any worship of false gods, whether by images or otherwise or the worship of the Lord through visible symbols (Hos 8:5-6; 10:5).

Ultimately in the New Testament idolatry came to mean, not only the giving to any creature or human creation the honor or devotion which belonged to God alone, but the giving to any human desire a precedence over God's will (1 Cor 10:14; Gal 5:20; Col 3:5; 1 Peter 4:3).

1 Corinthians 10:14, "Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry."

"**Your country**" is "not" a reference to Ur of the Chaldeans but rather "Haran" since Genesis 12:4 records that after receiving this gracious invitation from the Lord, Abraham left Haran.

Haran still exists in and is located in northern Mesopotamian, a commercial city on the Balikh River, sixty miles from its entrance into the Euphrates. The city was on the busy caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia, and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egyptian cities in the west and south and was a natural stopping place for Terah and Abraham on their trek to Palestine and was a center of the moon god cult.

The phrase "**from your relatives and from your father's house**" indicates that sometimes God commands us to do things that will challenge us to put His will first in our set of priorities ahead of spending time with our family members. It indicates that sometimes God will command us to do things that will demand that we sacrifice time

with family members we love in order to do His will or even to completely separated from them.

Luke 14:26, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

The command "**Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house**" indicates that Abraham had a very difficult time putting the Lord's will for his life ahead of his love for his family.

A comparison of Acts 7:2-4 and Genesis 12:1-4 indicates this as well since Abraham received two commands to leave his country, once while in Ur of the Chaldeans and one while in Haran.

Abram received this invitation from the Lord in Genesis 12:1 while yet in Haran according to Genesis 12:4.

Genesis 12:4

"So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."

Acts 7:2-4 indicates Abram received the invitation the first time while in Ur of the Chaldeans, which is in Mesopotamia.

Acts 7:2-4

"And he said, 'Hear me, brethren and fathers! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran.'"

"and said to him, 'LEAVE YOUR COUNTRY AND YOUR RELATIVES, AND COME INTO THE LAND THAT I WILL SHOW YOU.'"

"Then he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Haran. From there, after his father died, God had him move to this country in which you are now living."

Therefore, Acts 7:2-4 records the Lord first invitation to Abram was while he resided in Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia whereas Genesis 12:1-4 records the Lord second invitation to him while he resided in Haran, which was six hundred miles to the northwest of Ur.

The reason why the Lord had to issue the invitation twice to Abram was that he had a hard time separating from his family and friends in Haran and the fact that he stopped in Haran and did not continue moving indicates this as well.

Now, when Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans and Haran, he did not know where he was going according to Hebrews 11:8.

Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

Hebrews 11:8 is a reference to both the Lord's initial call of Abraham while he was in Ur of the Chaldeans and the second call he received while in Haran since in both places, the Lord did not tell Abraham where he was going. According to Genesis 12:5-7, it wasn't until he was in the land that the Lord identified to Abraham that He was giving to him the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:5-7

"Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan."

"Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land."

"The LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him."

The phrase "the land I will show you" is a reference to the land of Canaan, whose natural boundaries as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

Genesis 12:2 records the establishment of the "Abrahamic" covenant and deals with the promises that were given by the Lord to Abraham personally.

A "covenant" is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf.

Theologically (used of relations between God and man) it denotes a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, and specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations, which this undertaking involves.

The "Abrahamic" covenant that the Lord established with Abraham denoted the Lord's gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abraham and his descendants.

There are two types of covenants: (1) Conditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of the recipient for its fulfillment (2) Unconditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of God for its fulfillment.

The "Abrahamic" covenant was "unconditional" meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord's faithfulness.

Now we need to clarify an important aspect of an unconditional covenant. An unconditional covenant which binds the one making the covenant to a certain course of action, may have blessings attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient and that response is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God.

The blessings that Abraham would receive were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord's command to leave his country and his father's house and go to the land, which the Lord would show him, namely, the land of Canaan.

The fulfillment of unconditional covenants does not depend on the continued obedience of the recipient but rather the integrity and faithfulness of God who instituted the covenant.

The Lord was responsible to fulfill the agreement and Abraham's part was to take Him at His Word and accept it by means of faith.

The Lord's promise of land to Abraham in Genesis 12:1 is related to the "Palestinian Covenant," which was "unconditional" meaning it depended upon the Lord's faithfulness to Israel who

promised land to them, which will be literally fulfilled during the millennial reign of Christ (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18; 26:3-4; 35:12; Ex. 6:2-8; Num. 34:1-2; Deut. 30:1-9; Josh. 1:2-4).

The Palestinian covenant is related to the land that the Lord will give Israel whereas the “Abrahamic Covenant” is related to the “race” of the nation.

The Palestinian covenant was a confirmation and enlargement of the original Abrahamic covenant and amplified the land features of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The Palestinian Covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the Millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The Land Grant under the Palestinian Covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan. The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

The prophets of Israel prophesied of the Palestinian Covenant’s literal fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; 14:1-3; 27:12-13; 49:8-16; 66:20-22; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 30:10-11; 31:8, 31-37; Ezek. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

The “Abrahamic Covenant” contained seven promises, which fall under three categories: (1) Personal: **“I will bless you and make your name great”** (Gen. 12:2) (2) National: **“I will make you into a great nation”** (Gen. 12:2) (3) Spiritual and Universal: **“You will be a blessing...and all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you”** (Gen. 12:3).

Any promise the Lord gave to Abraham was to be appropriated by means of faith.

Genesis 12:2

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“**And**” is the conjunction *waw* (W+) and the imperfect tense of the verb *`asah* (hC**u**), “to make,” which forms a purpose clause expressing the Lord’s intention for commanding Abram to leave his country, father’s house and go to the land, which the Lord would show him.

The imperfect tense of *`asah* is “cohortative” meaning it expresses the Lord’s desire or intention to act on Abram’s behalf.

Abram’s obedience to the Lord’s command, which expresses his faith, enables the Lord to act on behalf of Abram and also appropriates the omnipotence of the Lord.

Matthew 17:20, “And He said to them, ‘Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.’”

“**Nation**” is the noun *goy* (yW{G}), which is in the singular referring to Abraham’s “national” posterity (Gen. 18:18), the nation of Israel that would originate from Abraham and Sarah’s son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob.

“**Great**” is the adjective *gadol* (lw{dG*}), which refers both to numbers and to significance or impact the nation of Israel would have on both human and angelic history.

Genesis 18:17, 18

“The LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do.’”

“since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?”

Therefore, the “national” posterity of Abraham, the nation of Israel has been a great nation in history during the reigns of David and Solomon and will be significant according to prophecy since she will be the head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ.

Isaiah 2:1-4

“The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.”

“Now it will come about that in the last days the mountain of the house of the LORD will be established as the chief of the mountains, and will be raised above the hills; And all the nations will stream to it.”

“And many peoples will come and say, ‘Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths. For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.’”

“And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; And they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.”

Israel has had a huge impact upon human history in that she was the custodian of the Old Testament Scriptures, the recipients of the covenants of promise, the Law (Rm. 9:1-5) and the nation from which the Savior, Jesus Christ would originate (Jn. 4:22).

Romans 9:1-5

“I am telling the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience testifies with me in the Holy Spirit.”

“that I have great sorrow and unceasing grief in my heart.”

“For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.”

“who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises.”

“whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”

John 4:22, “You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.”

Genesis 12:2

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“**Bless**” is the verb *barakh* (Er[^]B*), which appears five times in Genesis 12:1-3 and means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that Abraham and his descendants were endowed with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

Bruce K. Waltke, “The three nuances of blessing (13:2, 5; 14:22-23; 24:35; 26:12-13; 30:43; 32:3-21), potency/fertility (1:28; 13:16; 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; 28:3, 14; 35:11) and victory (cf. 1:22)-are spelled out in 22:17. Horst says, ‘Blessing brings the power for life, the enhancement of life, and the increase of life’” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 205; Zondervan).

The Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, the Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially. The Lord blessed anyone who was associated with Abraham.

H.C. Leupold commenting on this second promise, writes, “This statement does not refer to the nation but to Abram alone. A man is blessed when due to the gracious working of God all goes well with him (cf. 39:5); the things that he undertakes thrive; and true success crowns all his endeavors. This certainly is a promise that was realized in Abram’s life” (Exposition of Genesis 1, page 412).

The phrase “**I will bless you**” was fulfilled “temporally” according to Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 24:34-35 and it has been fulfilled “spiritually” according to Genesis 15:6 and John 8:56.

The “piel” stem of the verb *barakh* is “real factitive” meaning that Abraham would experience the blessings that the Lord would bring upon him.

Ezekiel 17:24, “I am the LORD; I have spoken, and I will perform it.”

“Name” is the noun *shem* (SV@), which refers to a person’s character, reputation and fame among men and in the kingdom of God.

The promise “**I will make your name great**” refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God.

This fame and reputation is expressed throughout Scripture in that Abraham is called a “**father of a multitude**” in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God’s confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

The phrase “**and you shall be a blessing**” is “not” a promise since the verb *hayah*, “**you shall be**” is in the “imperative” mood expressing a command and literally means, “so become a blessing” indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord’s commands.

The imperative mood of the verb *hayah* indicates that others would be blessed when Abraham walked by faith and was obedient to the Lord. Therefore, the imperative mood of *hayah* teaches us that the Lord wants us to be a blessing to others and this is accomplished by obedience to the Lord, which expresses our faith in the Lord.

Genesis 12:3 records the establishment of the “Abrahamic” covenant and deals with the promises by the Lord to Abraham for the nations of the world.

Genesis 12:3

“And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The promises “**I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse**” identifies the Lord with the cause of Abraham. Therefore, blessing Abraham would be equivalent to doing it to God whereas those who curse Abraham would be cursing God.

The promises “**I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse**” refers to the fact that the Lord would bless those who bless Abraham and curse those who curse him.

The promise “**in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**” refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind (Dt. 28:8-14; Is. 60:3-5, 11, 16) since it is only through the Lord Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19).

This promise was the Gospel of salvation proclaimed to Abraham (Gal. 3:8) and reaches back to the divided “**families**” (10:5, 20, 31) of the earth at the Tower of Babel who were alienated from God due to sin and rebellion and the deception of Satan but who would be blessed through faith alone in Christ alone.

Galatians 3:1-29

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”

“This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

“Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

“Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain?”

“So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

“Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

“Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.”

“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.’”

“So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”

“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL

THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

“Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

“However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.’”

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.’”

“in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

“Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.”

“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”

“What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.”

“For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.”

“Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.”

“Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.”

“Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.”

“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.”

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”

“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

“And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”

Therefore, Galatians 3 teaches that Gentiles and Jews who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior become the “spiritual” posterity of Abraham and heirs according to the promise made to Abraham in relation to the nations.

Genesis 12:3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The promise “**in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**” gives us further information regarding the Promised “Seed” of Genesis 3:15 who would destroy the works of the devil and would deliver Adam and Eve’s descendants from sin and Satan and indicates that the human nature of Jesus Christ would originate from the line of Abraham.

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth (Luke 3:38) and Shem (Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36) and now Genesis 12:3 states that Jesus Christ would be a descendant of Abraham.

The promise “**in you all the families of the earth will be blessed**” refers to God’s plan to reverse the curse of Genesis 3 and all the effects of the Fall of Adam and is God’s promise of salvation to the human race and is repeated five times in the Book of Genesis (Gen. 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). This covenant with Abraham was reaffirmed and confirmed after Abraham’s faith was tested (Gen. 22:15-18) and was confined to the Jews who are the racial descendants of Abraham (Gen. 17:1-14).

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians that Christian believers enter into the blessings promised to Abraham (Gal. 3:14, 29; 4:22-31) and his argument is based on this same covenant promise made with Abraham (Rom. 4:1-25). Paul taught that after the Fall of Adam, God revealed His purpose to provide salvation for sinners (Gen. 3:15) and which purpose was progressively revealed to man and the promise made to Abraham represented a significant and progressive step in that revelation.

The “Abrahamic” covenant has several applications in different areas of theology: (1) Soteriology: Study of salvation (2) Resurrection (3) Eschatology: Study of events that are future to the rapture of the church.

In Matthew 22:23-32, the Lord refuted the Sadducees’ unbelief in the resurrection by stating that God had revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 3:15), with whom He had entered into covenant relationships. Thus since these men had died without receiving the fulfillment of the promises (Heb. 11:13) and since the covenants could not be broken, it was essential for God to raise these men from the dead in order to fulfill His word. In Acts 26:6-8, Paul united the “**promise to the fathers**” with the resurrection from the dead.

Dwight Pentecost writes concerning the “Abrahamic” covenant and eschatology, “The eternal aspects of this covenant, which guarantee Israel a permanent national existence, perpetual title to the land of promise, and the certainty to material and spiritual blessing through Christ-and

guarantee Gentile nations a share in these blessings-determine the whole eschatological program of the Word of God” (Thy Kingdom Come, page 81, Victor Books).

The “Abrahamic” covenant serves as the foundation for the message delivered to the nation of Israel by the Old Testament prophets and writers. The “Abrahamic” covenant marked the “patriarchal” dispensation, which ended with Exodus of Israel and the giving of the Law at Sinai.

A “dispensation” is a period of human history defined in terms of divine revelation and according to the Bible, history is a sequence of divine administrations and these consecutive eras reflect the unfolding of God’s plan for mankind.

Scofield Reference Bible states on page 5, “A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect of obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God.”

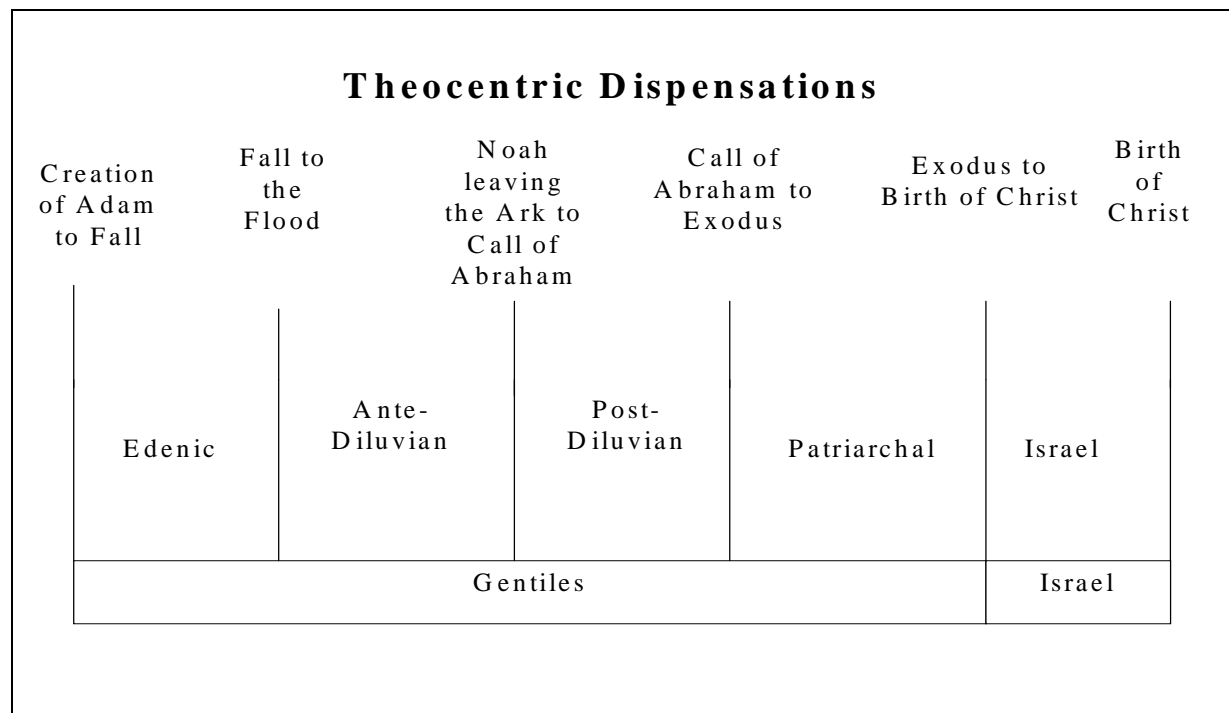
Ryrie, “A dispensation is a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God’s purpose.” (Dispensationalism Today, page 29).

Human history may be classified into six dispensations, which can be grouped into three categories: (1) Theocentric (2) Christocentric (3) Eschatological.

“Theocentric” dispensations are Old Testament dispensations extending from the creation of Adam to the virgin birth of Christ and are divided into two periods: (1) Gentiles (2) Israel.

The dispensation of the “Gentiles” extended from the creation of Adam to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and is divided into four periods: (1) “Edenic”: Creation of Adam to his fall (2) “Antediluvian”: Fall of Adam to Flood of Noah (3) “Post-Diluvian”: Noah leaving the Ark to call of Abraham (4) “Patriarchal”: Call of Abraham to the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and the giving of the Law.

The dispensation of the “Jews” extended from the Exodus of Israel from Egypt to the birth of Christ.



The “Christocentric” dispensations are New Testament dispensations extending from the birth of Christ to the resurrection, or rapture of the church and are divided into two periods: (1) “Hypostatic Union”: Birth of Christ to His death, resurrection, ascension and session (2) “Church Age”: Pentecost to the Rapture.

The “Eschatological” dispensations are dispensations, which will follow the rapture of the church and are divided into two periods: (1) “Tribulation”: Rapture of the church to the 2nd Advent of Christ (2) “Millennium”: 2nd Advent of Christ to the release of Satan from prison and the execution of his sentence to Lake of Fire. Therefore, the call of Abraham marked the “patriarchal” period of the dispensation of the Gentiles, which was a “Theocentric” dispensation.

The “Abrahamic” covenant is declared to be eternal or everlasting in Genesis 17:7, 13, 19; 1 Chronicles 16:17 and Psalm 105:10 and is confirmed repeatedly by reiteration and enlargement.

The “Abrahamic” covenant was solemnized by a divinely ordered ritual symbolizing the shedding of blood and passing between the parts of the sacrifice (Gen. 15:7-21; Jer. 34:18). This

ceremony assured Abraham that his seed would inherit the land in the exact boundaries given to him in Genesis 15:18-21.

The Lord gave circumcision to Abraham and his descendants to distinguish those who would inherit the promises as individuals through faith from those who were only physical seed of Abraham (Gen. 17:9-14).

The “Abrahamic” covenant was confirmed by the birth of Isaac and Jacob who also received the promises repeated in their original form (Gen. 17:10; 28:12-13).

A comparison of Hebrews 6:13-18 and Genesis 15:8-21 records that the “Abrahamic” covenant was immutable and was not only promised but solemnly confirmed by an oath from God.

Genesis 12:4-5 records Abraham’s journey from Haran to the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:4

“So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God indicating that Abram had a covenant relationship with God.

Genesis 12:4 records Abram’s obedience to the Lord’s command in Genesis 12:1 to leave his country (Haran) and from his father’s house, to the land, which the Lord would show him and which obedience demonstrated his faith in the Lord.

Hebrews 11:8, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

He did not know where he was going and it was not until he was in the land itself that Abram was told by the Lord that he and his descendants would be given the land of Canaan as indicated by Genesis 12:7.

Genesis 12:5, “Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.”

Genesis 12:6, “Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.”

Genesis 12:7, “The LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.”

Genesis 12:4 tells us that Abram’s nephew Lot went with him, thus easing the pain of separating from his family and countrymen.

“**Lot**” was the son of Haran and the nephew of Abram according to Genesis 11:27.

Genesis 11:27, 28

“Now these are the records of the generations of Terah. Terah (the-rakh-“delay”) became the father of Abram (“exalted father”), Nahor (naw-khor-“snorting”) and Haran (haw-rawn-“mountaineer”); and Haran became the father of Lot (“covering”).”

“Haran died in the presence of his father Terah in the land of his birth, in Ur of the Chaldeans.”

The fact that Haran died in the presence of his father Terah left Lot an orphan and the childless Abram took care of him. The fact that Lot went with Abram does not indicate that Abram violated the Lord’s command in Genesis 12:1 to go it alone since Lot of his own choosing went with Abram as indicated by the change of verb to *laqach* (jq^l#) in Genesis 12:5, which is translated, “**took**.” This verb *laqach* is not used in the passive stem with Lot and Abram’s family as the subject.

If the verb was used in the passive stem with Abram’s family and Lot as the subject, then it would mean that Abram took them all with him against their will. Rather, the verb is in the qal active stem indicating that Abram took responsibility for this entourage and they did not go against their will.

This passage also records that Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran, which by the standards of that day and age would make him middle-aged.

Remember, the aging process at this time was still much slower than it is in our day and age, so that Sarai, who was ten years younger than Abram, was still considered a beautiful woman according to Genesis 12:11.

This decision to leave Haran at this point in his life would not have come easily at his age as at an earlier period in his life. He was uprooted by God at point when most men were settling down.

So the mention of Abram’s age gives us insight into the quality of this great act of faith.

Genesis 12:4 records that this migration from Haran succeeded under God whereas the migration from Ur under Abram’s father Terah did not since they stopped in Haran. Haran still exists in and is located in northern Mesopotamian, a commercial city on the Balikh River, sixty miles from its entrance into the Euphrates. The city was on the busy caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia, and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egyptian cities in the west and south. It was a natural stopping place for Terah and Abraham on their trek to Palestine. Interestingly, Haran, like Ur, was a center of the

moon god cult. So Abram is finally leaving this heathen society.

The name “**Sarai**” means, “princess and suggests that rulers would come from her lineage and that she was a woman of a measure of social standing. Her name was later changed to “Sarah” in the covenant ceremony that appears in Genesis 17:5. Sarai was the daughter of Terah by a different mother than Abraham’s (20:12), therefore; she was the half-sister of Abraham.

Nahor married his niece, Milcah, daughter of Haran. Such incestuous relationships were later forbidden in the Mosaic Law.

The fact that Abram took not only Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew but also “**all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran**” indicates that Abram was evidently a fairly prosperous rancher or businessman at this time because he had considerable wealth and a number of servants.

The journey to Canaan was a long one, approximately four hundred miles to the southwest of Haran.

The phrase “**they set out for Canaan**” does “not” indicate that Abram knew where he was going since according to Hebrews 11:8, he did “not” know where he was going and Genesis 12:7 records that the Lord did “not” identify for him that Canaan would be his ultimate destination or land promised to him until he was finally in the land.

Genesis 12:1 records that the Lord said He would show Abram where this land was, thus inferring that Abram had to take this trip in faith meaning trusting in the Lord for His guidance, asking for that guidance in prayer and then listening to God in prayer tell him where he would eventually settle.

We must identify the voice of God in order to listen to God.

How to identify the Voice of God: (1) God will never tell us to get involved in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with the Word of God. (2) God will often ask us to do something, which conflicts with human wisdom. (3) God will never tell us to do anything that gratifies the old

Adamic sin nature. (4) God will challenge our faith or trust in Him in order to build our relationship and intimacy with Him. (5) God will often call for us to be courageous.

The Process involved in fellowship: (1) Communication: Listening to God (2) Comprehension: Understanding what God says (3) Confidence: Trusting in what God says (4) Change: Being transformed by what God says.

Without this process of communication, there simply cannot be any real spiritual change in the life of man. Because of this, God is deeply concerned about how well we listen when we are listening.

The Bible repeatedly emphasizes the importance of listening. The specific clause “hear the Word of the Lord” occurs 32 times in the NIV and 28 times in the NASB. The words “hear” or “listen O Israel” are found 6 times in the NIV and the NASB.

“Listen” is found 331 times and the majority of these passages in some way deal with listening to the Lord. “Hear” is found 347 times and again, many of these also have to do with hearing God’s Word.

We also find a number of comments like “Incline your ear,” or “give ear” or “pay or give attention” and similar expressions used in various ways to call man, and especially to God’s people, to listen intently to God.

In the New Testament, the Lord warns us to consider carefully what you hear (Mk. 4:24) and how you hear (Lk. 8:18). The words “today, if you hear his voice,” are found three times in Hebrews and once in the Old Testament (Heb. 3:7, 15; 4:7; Ps. 95:7).

Seven times, once in each of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3 we read, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”

In Mark 4:9 the Lord warned, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” and again in verse 23 He said “if anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” (NIV)

The point is simple, God has much to say to us and because He is the all-wise and sovereign God and because of our finite humanity as well as our old

Adamic sin nature, it is absolutely critical for us to listen carefully. But, as individuals with an old Adamic sin nature, even as sinners who have been redeemed, we are ever so prone to be distracted and drawn away with other things, even with good things.

We can too easily be like Martha, who was distracted by so many things, rather than Mary who sat at the feet of the Savior to hear His Word. The lesson is obvious: We are to listen so we can learn to trust the Lord and to fail to listen shows our determination to pursue life through our own resources and foolishness.

The Bible is our index or guide for all the other ways God communicates. If we are going to listen to God and discern His voice in the other avenues He uses, we must be listening to His Word, the Bible.

God communicates His Word in many ways: through those who teach it formally and informally as the pastor-teacher, in personal exhortation and encouragement, through song or music, through books, tapes, film, etc.

However, the primary method God has chosen, and that which is foundational to all the other ways God communicates in the church age, is the local assembly when the church is assembled together for the hearing of the Word.

Other things are involved, prayer, singing, praise, the Lord's Table, but at the center is the proclamation of the Word (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 4:11, 13; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).

We must also understand that God communicates through the events of our lives: (1) Special Times of Worship (singing, praise, prayer, teaching, ordinances). (2) Blessings that reveal His love and grace. (3) Trials and Irritations that become tools to get our attention and build character, but only as we hear and learn to relate and rest in the promises and principles of Scripture.

So Abraham spent a lot of time listening to God in prayer. This is how he determined to go to Canaan.

"Canaan is the more ancient name of Palestine, apparently derived from Hurrian, meaning, "belonging to the land of red purple," the dye the

early Canaanites or Phoenician traders peddled far and wide. It was obtained from the murex shells found on the Mediterranean (Phoenician) coast" (Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament, page 54, AMG Publishers).

"Canaan" was the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest by Joshua, which had the Mediterranean Sea as its eastern border and whose position served as the route of two major highways between Egypt and the Western coast of the Arabian Peninsula to Mesopotamia and Asia Minor (with connections to India and Europe respectively).

The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

Henry M. Morris, "Trade routes from Haran down into Damascus and the Canaanite countries were already established at this time" (The Genesis Record, page 296, Baker Book House).

Genesis 12:6-9 records Abraham's journey through the land of Canaan, which the Lord had promised to Abraham and his descendants.

Abram traveled through the land of Canaan and first stopped at "**Shechem**," which is approximately thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem and became revered by the Israelites since the Lord appeared to Abram there.

"**The oak of Moreh**" was a well-known landmark in the days of Abram and probably a pagan site of worship.

The fact that the Lord "**appeared**" to Abram is a "theophany," which is a theological term used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

The Lord appeared to Abraham three times (Gen. 12:7, 17:1; 18:1) and twice to Isaac (Gen. 26:2, 24) and once to Jacob (Gen. 35:9).

The Lord identifies the land of Canaan as the land that was promised to Abraham in Genesis 12:1.

Now, remember, this promise was not yet fulfilled since the Canaanites were still occupying the land, thus Abram had to continue to trust the Lord to deliver on His promise. Many times the promise often seems long and delayed and the believer must simply continue trusting the Lord day by day and trusting that His timing is always perfect.

Psalm 37:34, “Wait for the LORD and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you will see it.”

Henry M. Morris writes, “Until the opening of the larger door and the accomplishment of His specific and ultimate will in our lives, there are daily opportunities for service and witness wherever we are, and in whatever circumstances. There is still a testing time, when God must teach us patience and submission; and such a training often is long and slow. ‘He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much’ (Luke 16:10) (The Genesis Record, page 296, Baker Book House).

Throughout his lifetime, Abraham had to rest in the promise that the Lord made to him that he and his descendants would possess the land of Canaan and he had to trust the Lord to fulfill this promise in His perfect timing.

Genesis 12:7 records that Abram built an altar in order to worship the Lord and this is the second time in the Bible that we see a believer building an altar to the Lord. The first instance was recorded in Genesis 8:20 when Noah left the Ark.

Abram’s first act after the Lord identified the land of Canaan as the land promised to him in Genesis 12:1 and that his descendants would possess it, was to worship the Lord. By building the altar and offering sacrifices to the Lord, Abram was expressing his gratitude to the Lord for giving him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

Psalm 9:1, “I will give thanks to the LORD with all my heart; I will tell of all Your wonders.”

Abram responded to the Lord’s love and grace in promising his descendants the land of Canaan by worshipping Him. Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures. It is the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His

ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Genesis 12:8

“Then he proceeded from there to the mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD.”

The phrase “**pitched his tent**” indicates that Abram was a tent dweller and lived a nomadic existence, moving from place to place and never settling one specific area.

“**Bethel**” literally means, “house of God” and is identified with modern Beiten, approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem, which became one of the two capitals and cult centers of the northern kingdom and only Jerusalem is mentioned in the Old Testament more than Bethel.

“**Ai**” (ay) literally means, “the ruin” and was a large city east of Bethel.

Once again we see Abram building an altar to the Lord in response to the Lord’s graciousness in promising his descendants the land of Canaan. This is the second time in Genesis that we see someone said to be calling upon the name of the Lord, which is a reference to prayer. The first time the Bible records people calling upon the name of the Lord is in Genesis 4:25-26, which records that after the birth of Seth, that men began to call upon the name of the Lord.

The term “**Lord**” is applied to the Father (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; 20:42) and to the Son (Rm. 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:31) and the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17).

In Genesis 12:8, the Father is in view since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Prayer must be made in the name or Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

The believer is to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because it is through the merits of His impeccable Person and Finished Work on the

Cross and Advocacy with the Father as well as the believer's union with Him that gives the believer the privilege to boldly approach the throne of God in prayer.

Praying in our Lord's name means that we are to pray to the Father consciously aware of our exalted position where we are seated at the Father's right hand because of our eternal union and identification with Christ. Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Prayer is an expression of the believer's worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

In Genesis 12:8, we see Abram worshipping God the Father in prayer and the sacrifices on the altar indicate that Abram understood and acknowledged that he could only come to the Father in prayer through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who was portrayed in the animal sacrifices.

Every church age believer is commanded in Scripture to pray.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Make it your habit to pray."

There are five essential elements to prayer:

Confession

1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Thanksgiving

Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving."

Worship

Psalm 18:3, "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies."

Intercession

Ephesians 6:18, "By means of every kind of specific detailed reverential prayer requests,

all of you make it your habit to pray at each and every opportunity while in fellowship with the Spirit. Now, for this very purpose, all of you make it your habit to stay alert (in prayer) with every kind of persistent specific detailed requests with regards to each and every one of the saints."

Petition

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

In Genesis 12:8, Abram is entering into these five essential elements to prayer. He confessed his sins, and offered his thanksgiving and worship to God and interceded for others and offered up his own requests.

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, 15

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

"And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Abram is praying according to the will of God, asking God that this promise to give his descendants the land of Canaan would be fulfilled.

Answered prayer demands faith on the part of the believer (Mt. 17:20; Ja. 5:15) and here we have Abram is offering up his prayer in faith, trusting that God would come through on His promise.

Genesis 12:9

"Abram journeyed on, continuing toward the Negev."

The region of the "Negev" extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

Genesis 12:10-20 records Abraham's trip to Egypt, which was not according to the will of the Lord.

Genesis 12:10

“Now there was a famine in the land; so Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.”

In Genesis 12:10, we see that instead of turning to the Lord in prayer to meet his temporal needs and problems associated with the famine in the land of Canaan, Abram attempts to solve his temporal needs and problems on his own.

Philippians 4:6, “At this very moment, all of you stop continuing to be anxious about absolutely anything, but rather, concerning anything at all by means of reverential prayer in the presence of the Father and by means of petition accompanied by the giving of thanks, let your specific detailed requests be repeatedly made known in the presence of the Father.”

In this passage, we see the Lord testing Abram's faith by bringing in a famine in the land of Canaan, which the Lord promised him and Abram fails the test.

God permits the believer to go through adversity and problems in order to test the believer as to whether or not he will trust Him in the adversity and problems.

Jeremiah 20:12, “Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart.”

1 Peter 4:12, 13

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.”

“but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

James 1:2-3, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing

that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

Genesis 12:10 records Abram heading out of the Promised Land to Egypt, which in Scripture is a type of Satan's cosmic system. The land of Canaan is a type of the believer's separation from the cosmic system of Satan and fellowship with God whereas Egypt is a type of the believer living in the cosmic system of Satan and out of fellowship with God.

The apostle John prohibits his readers from loving the cosmic system of Satan and its temptations.

1 John 2:15-17

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.”

“The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

James rebukes his readers for committing spiritual adultery in their relationship with God by living according to the standards of Satan's cosmic system.

James 4:1-4

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”

“You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.”

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Just as Abram solved his problem with the famine by going down to Egypt and not turning to the Lord for help, so believers often solve their problems in life by going to the cosmic system instead of trusting in the Lord and turning to Him.

Abram who is the father of all those who believe (Rm. 4:11) fails to operate in faith meaning he failed to trust the Lord to meet the food supply problem in Canaan. Abram is motivated by fear at this particular time, he fears that he will not be able to feed his large entourage and large flocks that are traveling with him. Abram is not operating according to faith and is disobedient to the Lord since the Lord does not give him any revelation to leave Canaan because the Lord wants to test Abram's faith.

Notice that Abram never consults the Lord in prayer as he had been doing because he has become arrogant. Abram is acting cowardly since he is not operating in faith. Faith produces courage whereas unbelief produces cowardice. Faith honors the Lord whereas unbelief dishonors the Lord because it calls into question His integrity and ability to deliver on His promises.

Faith is obedience to God's commands and is the positive response to God's commands and acting upon those directions. The Bible never separates faith from obedience.

Hebrews 11:8, “By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.”

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them.

True Biblical faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

Here we see Abram not operating in faith because he is concentrating upon his circumstances rather than upon who and what the Lord is and His promises to him.

The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.

The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Abram is looking at the famine and thus entering into fear rather than concentrating on the Lord's promise that He would give Abram the land.

Principle: Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God and His Word.

Unbelief operates in the sphere of the old Adamic sin nature and contradicts faith and leaves God out. Unbelief blinded Abram as to the presence of the Lord in his life, which he saw firsthand, causing him to see only the difficulties in the land of Canaan.

Unbelief not only occupies itself with difficulties but also magnifies and exaggerates them so that spiritual defeat (Rm. 7) rules out experiencing victory (Rm. 8).

Abram has failed the adversity test. His unbelief had produced cowardice.

Like Abram, we as believers need to trust the Lord not only when all our needs are being supplied but also when it appears that suffering and privation are imminent.

Abram is not equal to the test of his faith so he attempts to take things into his own hands. The Lord had told Abram to go to Canaan, where He would bless him.

Also, there is a distinct possibility that Abram reached his decision because of the complaining of his wife and nephew, both of whom had never experienced hardship and whose faith was not yet as strong as that of Abram.

Notice that Abram's failure here in Genesis 12:10 follows a great victory, thus teaching the principle that the believer is most vulnerable to the attacks of Satan right after achieving a great spiritual victory.

The word "sojourner" is the Hebrew verb *gur* (rWG), which refers to a specific legal status of a person who lives as a resident and is in a dependent legal status and is not a native, but is dwelling upon the land.

In societies, which possess a clan structure, this person is without legal protection since he has no blood ties. Such a person, like Abraham, would have been dependent upon a native to recognize and protect him. This is the case in Egypt.

The Mari documents (1800 B.C.) indicate that the relationship between "sitting" farmers and nomadic herders (such as Abraham) was that contracts were drawn up concerning grazing and watering rights.

This relationship is known as "dimorphism" as these two distinct yet interrelated cultures exist side by side.

Abraham is entering into a land, where he had no legal rights and protection, which will affect his decision-making and will cause him to enter into a contract that will compromise his wife and integrity and witness before the unbeliever.

Genesis 12:11-16 records Abram giving his wife Sarai as compensation in an agreement with the Egyptians to let him sojourn in the land. Also, we will study Genesis 12:17-20, the Lord intervenes and overrules Abram's bad decision and brings a great plague upon Pharaoh's house, which Pharaoh recognizes is divine intervention and causes him to return Sarai to Abram and then sends them out of the country.

Genesis 12:11, "It came about when he came near to Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, 'See now, I know that you are a beautiful woman.'"

Genesis 12:12, "and when the Egyptians see you, they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live."

Genesis 12:13, "Please say that you are my sister so that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may live on account of you."

Egyptian custom would not allow a foreign prince and his entourage to live in Egypt without making a treaty or contract. The custom also was for the foreign prince to give an acceptable daughter or a sister into the Pharaoh's harem to seal the treaty and guarantee the prince's good behavior while in Egypt. Therefore, Abram is telling Sarai to say to the Egyptians that she is his sister, which is a half truth since she was his half-sister, having the same father Terah but different mothers according to Genesis 20:12.

If no treaty were made, crossing the border into Egypt would be considered an invasion, an act of war. Abram was reasoning that if he didn't make a treaty they would attack and kill him and take Sarai into Pharaoh's harem as a trophy of war, as was the custom.

If Abram made the treaty she would go into Pharaoh's harem, but at least he reasoned that he would stay alive and be able to take care of those under his protection. He also expected that Sarai would be treated well because of her great beauty.

Of course, he should have turned around and went back to Canaan rather than put himself and his wife in such a compromising position. Instead of staying in the land of Canaan and trusting in the Lord to provide in the midst of famine, Abram goes to Egypt and puts himself and his wife in a more dangerous position.

It would have been far better for Abram to entrust his life and the lives of his family to the Lord in Canaan, even in the midst of a severe famine, than to entrust it to Pharaoh, an unbeliever. The irony is that Abram is making a contract with an unbeliever, Pharaoh rather than placing his faith in the contract that the Lord made with him.

Principle: Better to trust the Lord with your life than with men.

Psalm 118:8, 9

"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man."

"It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes."

Principle: Better to go through adversity according to the will of God rather than going through adversity out of the will of God.

The Lord, who is in control of history and thus Abram's circumstances, has worked out the circumstances so that Abram has a choice to make, either to obey Him and stay in Canaan, which the Lord had promised him or disobey and give his wife Sarai to the Egyptians.

Abram doesn't go to the Lord in prayer because he is living in fear of the famine and when you live in fear you are out of fellowship and when you are out of fellowship you cannot pray. The Holy Spirit at this point has already convicted him that he is operating in unbelief by leaving the land of Canaan, which the Lord had promised him. You must first confess the sin and then pray.

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

Therefore, motivated by fear from unbelief, Abram attempts to deal with his fears with his own human power and intellect.

Abram has failed as Sarai's husband but Sarai has not failed as his wife since she is being obedient to Abram. The Lord is going to protect and honor Sarai for obeying her husband even though her husband is failing in his authority has her husband.

Principle for Christian women who are married, the Lord will protect you even if your husband fails in his authority as your husband.

Sarai's submissiveness to her husband is an excellent example for Christian women to follow when conducting themselves in their marriages, especially in adversity.

1 Peter 3:1-7

"In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives."

"as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior."

"Your adornment must not be merely external -- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses."

"but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."

"For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands."

"just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."

Genesis 12:14, 15

"It came about when Abram came into Egypt, the Egyptians saw that the woman was very beautiful."

"Pharaoh's officials saw her and praised her to Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house."

Sarai was so beautiful that the Egyptian recommended her to Pharaoh. Pharaoh pronounced PHAY row, was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. and in the Egyptian language the word Pharaoh means "great house." This word was originally used to describe the palace of the king but around 1500 B.C. this term was applied to the Egyptian kings and meant something like "his honor, his majesty."

Genesis 12:16

"Therefore he treated Abram well for her sake; and gave him sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels."

Genesis 12:14-16 records that everything went according to Abram's plan. The Egyptians took Sarai and she became a part of Pharaoh's harem and he was treated well because of her.

Abram's failure in Egypt is a perfect example of a believer being blessed by the devil when he is out of the will of God since Pharaoh prospers Abram materially because of Sarai's great beauty. For instance, camels were a prime measure of wealth and status as well as having many slaves.

Now, you might say, how could Abraham commit this terrible sin? The answer is simple, Abraham, like all men whether believer or unbeliever possesses a sin nature.

Every one in the human race possesses an old sin nature as a result of the imputation of Adam's original sin in the garden at the moment of physical birth, which makes them physically alive but spiritually dead and yet qualified for grace.

Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

The fact that we all have a sin nature means that at any time we can enter into sin, thus Abram simply makes a bad decision, which is motivated by his sin nature trend to fear, worry and anxiety. The Lord is not happy with this situation since the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ was to come through the line of Abram and Sarai and Sarai is an innocent victim of Abram's stupidity and will defend her honor.

Therefore, the Lord will intervene and exercise His omnipotence to overrule Abram's bad decision and force Pharaoh to remove Abram from Egypt so that he goes back to the land of promise in Canaan.

Genesis 12:17, "But the LORD struck Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife."

"Lord" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal name of God emphasizing the "immanency" and "sovereignty" of God

meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men.

Genesis 12:18, "Then Pharaoh called Abram and said, 'What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife?'"

Immediately, without anyone telling him, Pharaoh, an unbeliever recognizes that God has intervened by the supernatural character of the suffering inflicted upon his house.

Pharaoh is a very discerning human being and he would have to be in order to be an effective ruler, and recognizes that since Sarai has been taken into his harem, his house has suffered greatly.

Genesis 12:19, "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her for my wife? Now then, here is your wife, take her and go."

The unbeliever Pharaoh demonstrates more moral awareness than the believer Abram by rebuking Abram using his wife as compensation in the agreement, which permitted him to sojourn in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh discerns that Sarai must not have been Abram's sister but his wife since his house has suffered greatly since she was admitted into his harem.

Genesis 12:20, "Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him."

In Genesis 12:10-20, we see the function of God's directive, permissive and overruling will. Directive will of God: God directly states what He desires of us. Permissive will of God: God permits us to have our own way. Overruling will of God: God overrules our decisions-not letting them have their intended results-in order to protect us and the rest of mankind from our own negative volition and to preserve and perpetuate His own marvelous plan.

In Genesis 12:7 the Lord's "directive" will is stated where the Lord promises to give to Abram the land of Canaan.

Genesis 12:7, "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him."

In Genesis 12:10-16, we see the Lord's "permissive" will in action where He "permits" Abram to leave the land of Canaan and give up his wife Sarai as compensation in an agreement with the Egyptians to let him sojourn in Egypt.

In Genesis 12:17-20, we see the "overruling" God in action, where the Lord intervened and does not permit Pharaoh to have sexual intercourse with Sarai, which would have resulted in adultery and would have been worthy of death, thus God protected Pharaoh from unwittingly committing adultery with Sarai.

Also, notice that even though Abram failed, he was still blessed by the Lord since he took everything with him that the Egyptians gave him because of his wife Sarai and this is indicated by the phrase "**and they escorted him away, with his wife and all that belonged to him.**"

Genesis 12:16 records that because Sarai was so beautiful the Egyptians gave him "**sheep and oxen and donkeys and male and female servants and female donkeys and camels.**"

Therefore, Abram learns firsthand of the Lord's grace where the Lord treats Abram better than he deserves. The Lord was faithful to His covenant with Abram even though Abram was unfaithful to Him.

Remember, the Lord's covenant with Abram recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 was "unconditional" meaning that the fulfillment of the covenant was dependent upon the faithfulness of the Lord rather than Abram being faithful.

2 Timothy 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

Abram has learned first hand of the Lord's protection and concern for him and his family, and that He is faithful to His covenant with Abram (Ps. 105:8-15).

Genesis 13

Genesis 13:1-4 records Abram leaving Egypt and returning to the land of Canaan, which the Lord had promised to him and his descendants as a permanent possession. The land of Canaan was a place of blessing since the Lord promised it to Abram and his descendants.

In this passage, we also see Abram turning to the Lord in prayer and worshipping the Lord in appreciation for delivering him and his family from Pharaoh and Egypt.

Genesis 13:1

"So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him."

In Scripture, Egypt is a type of Satan's cosmic system and being out of the fellowship with God whereas the land of Canaan is a type of the believer's separation from the cosmic system of Satan and fellowship with God. Thus, we see Abram leaving Egypt and returning to the land of Canaan indicating that he is back in fellowship with God and walking by means of his faith in the Lord's promises. So we see here in Genesis 13:3-4, Abram restored to fellowship with the Lord.

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

Abram has learned a valuable lesson while in Egypt. He has learned that he must turn to the Lord and trust Him to solve his problems rather than to rely upon his own human power and intellect.

Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding."

Abram has also learned that he must not enter into fear but rather trust in the Lord for safety and protection from his adversaries.

Psalms 56:3, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."

It was fear that the Egyptians would kill him and take his wife Sarai, which got him into trouble while he was in Egypt.

Psalms 56:11, "In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Abram has also learned through his failure in Egypt that the Lord will deliver Him in times of adversity.

Psalm 91:1-16

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty."

"I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!"

"For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence."

"He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark."

"You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day."

"Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon."

"A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you."

"You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked."

"For you have made the LORD, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place."

"No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent."

"For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."

"They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone."

"You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down."

"Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name."

"He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him."

"With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation."

Abram has learned by his failure in Egypt that even when he is unfaithful to the Lord, the Lord is always faithful to him!

2 Timothy 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

Abram has learned that the God he worships is always faithful.

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

He has learned through his failure in Egypt that all things work together for those who love God and that nothing can separate him from the love of God.

Romans 8:28-39

"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

"For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren."

"and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified."

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?"

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies."

"who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

“Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?”

“Just as it is written, ‘FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG. WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.’”

“But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.”

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers.”

“nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Now in Genesis 13:1, we see Abram leaving Egypt and returning to the Negev.

Genesis 13:1

“So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, he and his wife and all that belonged to him, and Lot with him.”

The region of the “**Negev**” extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

Abram’s wife Sarai is specifically mentioned in Genesis 13:1 as being with Abram when he left Egypt in order to recall to mind that through his bad decision he almost lost his wife.

Lot is also specifically mentioned here as being with Abram when he left Egypt since he is about to figure in the incident to follow in Genesis 13:5-18 where Abram and Lot separate from each other.

Genesis 13:2

“Now Abram was very rich in livestock, in silver and in gold.”

Abram was a lot richer when he left Egypt than when he went in to it. As we saw in Genesis 12:15-16, Pharaoh made Abram rich because of the great beauty of his wife Sarai, who he added to his harem. For Abram to have silver and gold was extremely rare among nomadic or pastoral people like himself and was probably the result of selling

some of his livestock off, and which livestock was also a sign of wealth in the patriarchal period.

Genesis 13:3, “He went on his journeys from the Negev as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai.”

As Abram traveled up from Egypt into the Negev, he finally arrived again at Bethel, the last place where he built an altar and called upon the Lord. It was at Bethel that Abram experienced intimate fellowship with the Lord and worshipped Him, thus, it was a place of wonderful memories for Abram and would be a reminder of the Lord’s covenant promises to him.

“**Journeys**” is the noun *massa* (uS^m^ (mas-sah), which means, “breaking camp, journey” and denotes that Abram’s entourage gathered up their moveable property and set out for a new geographical location.

In the plural, the word indicates that this trip from Egypt to Bethel to the place where Abram’s tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai was in stages.

“**Bethel**” literally means, “house of God” and is identified with modern Beiten, approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem, which became one of the two capitals and cult centers of the northern kingdom and only Jerusalem is mentioned in the Old Testament more than Bethel.

“**Ai**” (ay) literally means, “the ruin” and was a large city east of Bethel.

Genesis 13:4, “to the place of the altar which he had made there formerly; and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.”

“**Altar**” is the noun *mizbeach* (j^B@w+m!) (miz-bay-akh), which had on prescribed shape or material constructed of earth and stones and was the place Abram set up to worship the Lord and offering sacrifices to the Lord, which portray the Person and Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Genesis 13:4 records that Abram built an altar in order to worship the Lord and this is the third time in the Bible that we see a believer building an altar to the Lord. Abram’s first act after the Lord delivered him and his family from Egypt was to worship the Lord. By building the altar and

offering sacrifices to the Lord, Abram was expressing his gratitude to the Lord for delivering him and his wife from the Egyptians.

Abram is worshipping the Lord because he has received another revelation concerning the character and nature of God, namely, that the Lord is faithful and is a God of unconditional love. Abram responded to the Lord's love and grace in delivering him and his family from Egypt by worshipping Him.

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures. It is the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

“**Called**” is the verb *qara* (ar*q+), which is a reference to prayer.

“**Name**” is the noun *shem* (sv@), which is pronounced shame and refers to the authority, majesty, power, excellent character and nature of the Person of the Lord.

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is pronounced ye-ho-vaw and is the personal name of God emphasizing that He is the redeemer of mankind and is used in His relationship to His covenants or contracts with men.

In Genesis 12:8, the Father is in view since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6), made in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17) and in the power of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Prayer is an expression of the believer's worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

In Genesis 13:4, we see Abram worshipping God the Father in prayer and the sacrifices on the altar indicate that Abram understood and acknowledged

that he could only come to the Father in prayer through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who was portrayed in the animal sacrifices.

Genesis 13:5-12 records the separation of Abram from his nephew Lot.

Genesis 13:5

“Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents.”

“Lot,” whose name means, “covering,” and whose father was Haran and was the nephew of Abram. If you recall in our studies of Genesis 11:27-32, Lot's father Haran died leaving Lot an orphan but Abram's father Terah took custody of him and when Abram left for Canaan after Terah died, in response to the Lord's invitation, Lot went with him of his own volition. Not only did Abram prosper in materially and financially in Egypt but so did Lot and this caused problems between the two.

Genesis 13:6

“And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together.”

According to Genesis 12:1-3, the Lord had promised to bless Abram and nowhere does the Lord promise to bless Lot, so what we see here is that Lot is blessed by being associated with Abram.

Genesis 12:2, “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“**Bless**” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” and indicates that Abraham and his descendants were endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.

The Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, the Lord blessed Abram in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially and materially.

The Lord blessed anyone who was associated with Abraham, thus Lot was blessed because of being associated with Abram.

Genesis 13:7

“And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land.”

The “Canaanites” lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua and whose eastern border was the Mediterranean Sea (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51).

In Genesis 10:19, Moses defines the borders of the Canaanites because it is this land that the Lord will dispossess for Israel and fulfill the prophecy of Noah in Genesis 9:24-25 regarding Canaan.

The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

The “Perizzites” refers to a tribe of people who inhabited the mountainous region eventually taken over by the tribes of Ephraim and Judah (cf. Josh. 11:3; 17:5; Judg. 1:4f.) and because they were related to the Canaanites, the term “Perizzites” often refers to this entire group (cf. Gen. 13:7; 34:30).

Genesis 13:8

“So Abram said to Lot, ‘Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.’”

Genesis 13:9

“Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left.”

Since Abram was the oldest, he had a right to choose first, which land he would settle in.

Furthermore, Lot came along for the ride since it was Abram that the Lord had called and not Lot.

Abram is being “magnanimous” here by giving Lot the first choice when we would expect him to cling to the land that was promised to him by the Lord and go tell Lot to find his own land.

A believer who is magnanimous is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentment.

In Genesis 13:8-9, we see that Abram is generous in forgiving the insult heaped upon him by Lot and his herdsmen who did not have a right to the land as Abram did and yet Abram is not pettily resentful or vindictive towards him. Rather, Abram insists upon maintaining a good relationship with his nephew and is tolerant, patient and generous toward Lot.

A believer who is “magnanimous” is noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law and does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice.

Abram does not insist upon his own rights to the land in order to preserve unity between him and Lot. Abram, who was older and superior to Lot, humbles himself before his inferior and subordinate, Lot, in order to preserve peace, thereby demonstrating himself to be the spiritual superior to Lot and foreshadows the condescension and humility and magnanimity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

The Lord will exalt Abram because of his humility whereas the Lord will humble Lot because of his arrogance and selfishness.

Luke 14:11, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Abram has denied himself and humbled himself, which foreshadows the self-denial and humility of the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross.

Philippians 2:5-11

“Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset.”

“On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men.”

“In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

“For this very reason in fact God the Father has promoted Him to the highest-ranking position and has awarded to Him the rank, which is superior to every rank.”

“In order that in the sphere of this rank possessed by Jesus every person must bow, celestials and terrestrials and sub-terrestrials.”

“Also, every person must publicly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father.”

The apostle Paul wants the Philippian believer's to follow suit.

Philippians 4:5, “Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord's return is immanent.”

Being magnanimous is one of the functions and manifestations of the believer's royal ambassadorship. The believer can witness with either his words (presenting the Gospel) or his actions.

The magnanimous behavior of a believer manifests one of the characteristics of Christ who was generous and gracious in forgiving and tolerant in the face of insults and is a manifestation of the Spirit and the Word's work in the life of a believer.

James 3:17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, magnanimous, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

Magnanimous behavior among believers will resolve the personality conflicts and is one of the qualities that a pastor is to possess.

1 Timothy 3:3, “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but magnanimous, peaceable, free from the love of money.”

Titus 3:2, “to malign no one, to be peaceable, magnanimous, showing every consideration for all men.”

Magnanimity among believers will produce unity in the local assembly.

Abram's magnanimity has produced peace between him and his nephew Lot. Abram is walking by faith, which gives him the capacity to magnanimous. Abram operated in faith and not by sight, trusting in the Lord, confident that the Lord would take care of him wherever he settled whereas Lot is not walking by faith, but rather by sight, which the believer is prohibited from doing.

2 Corinthians 5:7, “for we walk by faith, not by sight.”

The conduct of Abram and Lot reveals the spiritual principle that those who walk by faith and trust in the Lord will be unselfish and will avoid strife and contention whereas those who do not walk by faith, and do not trust the Lord will be selfish and will be the cause of strife and contention.

The separation of Abram from Lot reveals the spiritual principle that the servants of God who walk by faith and not sight and avoid strife and other temptations must not only separate themselves from unbelievers (Ex. 6:6; 2 Cor. 6:17) but also from believers who are in apostasy or reversionism (1 Cor. 5:5-7; 2 Jn. 10-11).

The apostle Paul taught the principle of separation in relation to choosing a marriage partner where the believer is not to marry an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14-18).

2 Corinthians 6:14, “Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

The apostle Paul also taught the principle of separation from believers who are involved in a lifestyle of immoral degeneracy (1 Cor. 5:1-11).

1 Corinthians 5:9-11

“I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people.”

“I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.”

“But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler -- not even to eat with such a one.”

The apostle Paul taught the principle of separation in relation to the believer separating from believers who did not obey the apostle’s teaching.

2 Thessalonians 3:6, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.”

Romans 16:17, 18

“Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.”

“For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”

The apostle John also taught the principle of separating from those who did not adhere to the apostolic teaching.

2 John 10, 11

“If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting.”

“for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.”

Genesis 13:10

“Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere -- this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah -- like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar.”

When Lot looked out over the valley of the Jordan, he more than likely was standing on an elevation close to Bethel, which is 2,886 feet above sea level and has a magnificent view of the Jordan Valley to the southeast.

“The valley of the Jordan” was a tropical area between Jericho and Zoar, 800 to 1200 feet below sea level, where crops could grow all year-round.

Like the rich delta of the Nile area in Egypt, the valley of the Jordan was well watered land stretching to Zoar at the southeast end of the Dead Sea and reminded Abram and Lot of the stories of the Garden of Eden (the Lord), which were passed on from Noah to his three sons and their descendants. Like Egypt, which has the Nile, the valley of the Jordan is fed by streams, brooks, springs and oases from the base of the Jordanian Rift.

Today, the valley of the Jordan is no longer a green, well-watered land since the Lord’s judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah brought a drastic change to the entire area.

“Sodom” and “Gomorrah” are on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians “the cities of the plain.”

Abraham pleaded to the Lord to spare these cities on account of Lot, which is recorded in Genesis 18:16-33 and the Lord fulfilled Abraham’s request but destroyed the rest of the inhabitants of the city, which is recorded in Genesis 19.

The phrase “like the garden of the Lord” is a reference to the Garden of Eden and indicates that like the Garden of Eden, the valley of the Jordan, possessed breathtaking beauty and was full of lush vegetation.

The phrase “like the land of Egypt” tones down the previous comparison and indicates that like rich fertile land of Egypt, which tempted Abram to

depart from Canaan, the valley of the Jordan was also a rich fertile land, but points us back to Abram's disastrous choice to go to Egypt, implying that Lot's choice was a bad one.

"Zoar" was a small town situated on the south or southeast of the Dead Sea and was the only one of the five cities of the valley or plain that were not destroyed by fire in God's judgment recorded in Genesis 19:24-28 and is the town to which Lot escaped from the coming judgment (Gen. 19:20-23, 30).

Genesis 13:11

"So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other."

In Genesis 13:10-11, we see Lot yielding to the temptation of the lust of the eyes, which the believer is prohibited from doing in 1 John 2:15-17 and which temptation Eve was exposed to by Satan in the Garden of Eden.

Genesis 3:6, "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 desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate."

1 John 2:15, 16

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

"**Lust of the eyes**" is a temptation appealing to personal gain and was used against the Woman and is recorded in **Genesis 3:6b**, "that it was a **delight to the eyes**."

The fertile tract of land called the valley of the Jordan and in particular the southern region of it, appealed to Lot for personal gain.

Lot also makes this choice without concern for his uncle Abram who could have left him in Haran but instead took him along when he was orphaned. Lot

displays an ungrateful attitude towards his uncle Abram. Lot made the choice of sight rather than the choice of faith.

Abram operated in faith and not by sight, trusting in the Lord, confident that the Lord would take care of him wherever he settled whereas Lot is not walking by faith, but rather by sight, which the believer is prohibited from doing.

Lot is in danger because he has separated from God's people who are led by Abram at this time and has yielded to temptation and will dwell among unbelievers who are immoral degenerates (Gen. 13:10; 19:1, 33).

Lot's decision to leave Abram is another manifestation that he is "backsliding" or in "apostasy" or in "reversionism" meaning he is disobedient and negative towards the will of God and is under divine discipline.

Genesis 13:12

"Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled in the cities of the valley, and moved his tents as far as Sodom."

As a result of Lot's choice, Abram was left on the dry hillsides of central Canaan and having to compete for grazing land with the indigenous population while Lot settled among the five cities of the plain, pitching his tent near the city of Sodom whose inhabitants were wicked.

Lot failed to see Sodom from the Lord's perspective and if he did he would have never settled there. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses contrasts the choices made by Lot and Abram.

Abram stays in the land of promise and the place of blessing, obedient to the Lord and thus in fellowship with Him whereas Lot has settled in an evil place, which is the result of his disobedience and prevents him from experiencing fellowship with the Lord.

Genesis 13:13

"Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD."

"**Wicked**" is the adjective *ra`* (ur[^]), which describes the men of Sodom as conducting their lives independently of God and in the context of

Genesis 13-19, this independence from God expressed itself gross immorality and specifically, homosexuality.

“**Exceedingly**” is the adverb *me’odh* (da)m+) (meh-ode), which intensifies the meaning of the verb *ra’*, “wicked,” thus indicating that the evil that the men of Sodom were involved was “gross” immorality, which is defined as homosexuality in Genesis 19.

The phrase “**against the Lord**” describes the men of Sodom as opposed to the laws of God that regulated conduct between the sexes and which laws are later reflected in the Ten Commandments recorded in Exodus 20:1-10.

Leviticus 18:22, “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.”

Leviticus 20:13, “If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

Genesis 13:14-17 records the Lord overruling Lot’s decision in favor of Abram resulting in the Lord promising Abram and his descendants the land of Canaan, which is called in theology, the Palestinian Covenant.

Genesis 13:14, “**The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, ‘Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.’**”

The Hebrew text of Genesis 13:14 contains what we call in Hebrew grammar a “*waw*-disjunctive construction” where we have the conjunction *waw* plus a noun and a verb.

Here in Genesis 13:14, we have the conjunction *waw* followed by the articular proper noun *Yahweh*, “**Lord**,” which is in turn followed by the 3rd person masculine singular qal perfect form of the verb *`amar*, “**said**.”

There are 2 common types of disjunction: (1) A continuity of scene and participants but a change of action. (2) Where the scene and participants shift.

If the disjunctive *waw* is used in a situation with continuity of setting, the clause it introduces may contrast with the preceding, specify contemporary circumstances, or causes, or provide a comparison.

In Genesis 13:14, we have a continuity of scene in that we are still in the land of Canaan but we do have a change of participants with Lot leaving the picture and the Lord entering into the scene.

The *waw*-disjunctive construction expresses the contrast between Lot’s choice, which leaves out Abram and the Lord’s sovereign will for Abram overruling Lot’s choice in favor of Abram.

In Genesis 13:5-13, we see Lot going against the will of God as demonstrated by his selfish choice, that disregarded the Lord’s promise to Abram to give him the land of Canaan and his descendants and not to Lot.

In Genesis 13:14, we see the Lord’s sovereign will being expressed to Abram, which will “overrule” the decision by Lot.

The sovereign will of God deals with the function of human volition in three ways: (1) God’s directive will: What God desires of us. (2) God’s permissive will: God allows us to have our own way. (3) God’s overruling will: God will not let our negative decisions toward His will to have their intended results-in order to protect us and the rest of mankind from our own negative volition and to preserve and perpetuate His own marvelous plan.

Therefore, in Genesis 13:14-18 we see the “overruling” will of God in action where the Lord does “not” allow Lot’s decision to have its intended results in order to protect Lot from his own bad decision and to preserve and perpetuate His own plan for Abram, which would bring blessing to the entire human race.

The *waw*-disjunctive construction contrasts the lifting up of Lot’s eyes in Genesis 13:10 in disobedience to the Lord’s will with the lifting up of Abram’s eyes in response to the Lord’s command in Genesis 13:14.

If you recall, Abram has just separated from Lot and deferred to him, letting him choose the land to settle in as recorded in Genesis 13:5-13 and by

doing so, Abram did not lose anything as promised by the Lord.

Notice, that the Lord promises Abram the land eastward, which is where Lot chose to settle. In the Lord's eyes, the land was Abram's and his descendants. The Lord is overruling Lot's selfish choice in favor of Abram. Therefore, we see the Lord intervening on behalf of Abram in order to preserve and perpetuate His plan for Abram and the nation of Israel, from which the Messiah would come and bring blessing to the entire world.

The phrase **"Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward"** reflected a legal practice in the days of Abram of transferring property rights by sight and intention.

The Lord invited Moses to do the same in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 before he died and Joshua led Israel into the land promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

In both instances, with Moses in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 and Abram in Genesis 13:14-17, the divine invitation to view the land is given to confirm the promise even though they both did not participate in the dispossessing of the Canaanites. Both Abram and Moses did "not" receive the promise but they will receive it in their resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ.

In Genesis 13:14-17, we see Abram trusting the Lord's promise to give him the land of the Canaanites who were at the time of the promise occupying the land. Therefore, he was going to have to walk by means of faith and not sight and trust the Lord to come through on His promises, even though it appeared that this promise would be impossible to fulfill, but with God nothing is impossible. The circumstances did not look promising but Abram trusted in the Lord to deliver on this promise because he knew the Lord was omnipotent.

The principle of faith: (1) God speaks (2) We hear His Word (3) We obey His Word.

Hebrews 11:1-16

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

"For by it the men of old gained approval."

"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks."

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God."

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

"By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise."

"for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

"By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised."

"Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE."

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

"For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own."

"And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return."

"But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them."

Genesis 13:15, "for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever."

The phrase "**all the land which you see**" is a reference to the land of Canaan, which is tract of land, which covers all Palestine west of the Jordan (Num 34:2-12) and whose western border is the Mediterranean Sea.

The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

"**Your descendants**" refers to regenerate Israel and does "not" refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel was promised the land of Canaan.

The land grant was a gift and could not be purchased since the Lord is the Creator and Possessor heaven and earth.

Psalms 115:15-16, "May you be blessed of the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth. The heavens are the heavens of the LORD, but the earth He has given to the sons of men."

Genesis 14:19, "He (Melchizedek) blessed him and said, 'Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth.'"

The promise of land and descendants are intertwined because the descendants would possess the land.

Genesis 13:16, "I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered."

"**Your descendants**" refers to Abram's "national" posterity (Gen. 18:18), which is regenerate (born again) Israel that would originate from Abram and Sarah's son Isaac and Isaac's son Jacob and does "not" refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel was promised the land of Canaan.

The prophecy that Abram's descendants would be as the dust of the earth was in a "near" sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon.

1 Kings 4:20, "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing."

This prophecy will be fulfilled in the "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ.

Hosea 1:10, "Yet the number of the sons of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered."

Genesis 13:17

"Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you."

Abram's walking through the land symbolized his legal acquisition of it.

Bruce K. Waltke, "Kings asserted their right to rule their territory by symbolically tracing out its boundaries. In Egypt (from ca. 3000 B.C.), on the day of his enthronement, the new Pharaoh circumambulated the fortified wall in a festal procession known as the 'circuit of the wall.' The Hittite king (ca. 1300 B.C.) toured his realm at the annual winter festival of Nun-ta-ri-ya-shas. In a poem of Ugarit (on the coast of Syria about 1400 B.C.), Baal made rounds of 'seventy-seven towns, eighty-eight cities' in order to assert his new kingship over gods and humans. Similarly, the priests within Joshua's army carried the Lord's throne around the walls of Jericho for seven days presumably to stake out their claim (Josh. 6). Sarna notes, 'Early Jewish exegetes (Targ. Jon.) understood this traversing of the length and breadth of the land to be a symbolic act constituting a mode of legal acquisition termed

hazakah in rabbinic Hebrew” (Genesis, A Commentary, pages 222-223).

Genesis 13:14-18 records the Lord promising land to Abram and is called in theology, the “Palestinian” covenant.

The “Palestinian” covenant is in fact an extension of the “Abrahamic” covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

A “covenant” is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other’s behalf.

Theologically (used of relations between God and man) it denotes a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, and specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations, which this undertaking involves.

Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant that the Lord established with Abram denoted the Lord’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abram and his descendants.

There are two types of covenants: (1) Conditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of the recipient for its fulfillment (2) Unconditional: Dependent upon the faithfulness of God for its fulfillment.

Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness.

An unconditional covenant which binds the one making the covenant to a certain course of action, may have blessings attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient and that response is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God.

The blessings that Abram would receive were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord’s command to go to the land of Canaan. The fulfillment of unconditional covenants does not depend on the continued obedience of the recipient but rather the faithfulness of God who instituted the covenant. Any promise the Lord gave to Abraham was to be appropriated by means of faith.

The Lord’s promise of land to Abram and his descendants in Genesis 13:14-17 is an “extension” upon His promise to Abram in Genesis 12:1 and is thus related to the “Abrahamic” covenant.

Genesis 12:1-7

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.’”

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

“So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.”

“Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his nephew, and all their possessions which they had accumulated, and the persons which they had acquired in Haran, and they set out for the land of Canaan; thus they came to the land of Canaan.”

“Abram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. Now the Canaanite was then in the land.”

“The LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.”

The “Palestinian” covenant was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East

Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan.

The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10 describes seven features of the "Palestinian" covenant.

Deuteronomy 30:1-10

"So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you."

"and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons."

"then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you."

"If your outcasts are at the ends of the earth, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you back."

"The LORD your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers."

"Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live."

"The LORD your God will inflict all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you."

"And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today."

"Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers."

"if you obey the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul."

Seven features of the "Palestinian" covenant: (1) The nation will be plucked off the land for its unfaithfulness (Dt. 28:63-68; 30:1-3). (2) There will be a future repentance of Israel (Dt. 28:63-68; 30:1-3). (3) Israel's Messiah will return (Dt. 30:3-6). (4) Israel will be restored to the land (Dt. 30:5). (5) Israel will be converted as a nation (Dt. 30:4-8; cf. Rm. 11:26-27). (6) Israel's enemies will be judged (Dt. 30:7). (7) The nation will then receive her full blessing (Dt. 30:9).

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abram's descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The prophets of Israel prophesied of the "Palestinian" covenant's literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 31:8, 31-37; Ezek. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Genesis 13:18, "Then Abram moved his tent and came and dwelt by the oaks of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and there he built an altar to the LORD."

"**Mamre**" was located in "**Hebron**" as indicated by the phrase "**which are in Hebron**" and received its name from its owner, Mamre, who was a chief of the Amorites who sought security in an alliance with Abram and was blessed because of Abram (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24).

The "**oaks of Mamre**" evidently were a grove of terebinth trees that was owned by Mamre, which was the location of Abram's encampment when he came up from Egypt according to Genesis 13:18, 14:13 and 18:1.

"**Hebron**" was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinth) filled the area.

Once again we see Abram building an altar to the Lord in response to the Lord's graciousness in promising him and his descendants land.

By building the altar and offering sacrifices to the Lord, Abram was expressing his gratitude to the Lord for making this covenant promising land to him and his descendants.

Psalm 106:1, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

Abram responded to the Lord's love and grace in promising his descendants the land of Canaan by worshipping Him.

Genesis 14

We begin our study of Genesis 14 by noting Genesis 14:1-4 where the Dead Sea Kings in the days of Abram rebelled against the Eastern kings of Mesopotamia. Genesis 14:5-12 records the defeat of these Dead Sea kings by the Eastern kings.

This battle had a major impact on Abram since these Eastern kings captured Lot his nephew who lived in the Dead Sea area.

The designation "eastern" kings are given to these four kings since their kingdoms resided in Mesopotamia, which is east of Israel.

As you recall, without any deference to his elder, Abram, Lot chose for himself the area of the Dead Sea and in particular the area of Sodom, whose inhabitants were involved in gross immorality. This decision to settle in Sodom, not only demonstrated that Lot was out of the will of God at this time but also put him at great risk and so because of his bad decision to separate from Abram, he found himself a prisoner of war of these Eastern kings.

Genesis 14:1, "And it came about in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim."

The four eastern kings are listed in alphabetical order, though Chedorlaomer is their leader. None of the kings mentioned in Genesis 14:1 has been identified by extra biblical sources but their names do fit the types from the Ancient Near East of the

period. Their names suggest an area from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf, the entire Mesopotamian Valley and what is later known as Babylon and Asher.

One of the kings is from Shinar (now Iraq), one is from Ellasar (Iraq), one is from Elam (now Iran) and one appears to be from northern Babylonia (northern Iraq).

In the days of Abraham, kingdoms were still small, probably not much more than city-states and thus were not armies that were comparable in size to those who invaded Palestine in later times, such as Babylon, Assyria and Rome.

Archaeology has confirmed that invasions and wars were common all through the Middle East as each tribe sought to obtain for itself the most desirable lands and resources.

The objective of this war between the Eastern kings and the Dead Sea kings was the rich metal deposits of the region and thus was for economic purposes.

The first king mentioned is "**Amraphel**" whose name means, "sayer of darkness: fall of the sayer" and is said to be the "**king of Shinar.**"

Genesis 11:1-9 records that the Tower of Babel rebellion took place in Shinar, which in the ancient world was a designation for Babylon and is the area of what is now known as Iraq. Therefore, king "**Amraphel**" ruled in the region now known as Iraq.

He is often been identified as "Hammurabi," the great king of Babylon but "Hammurabi" did not come onto the scene until many years later.

The second of the eastern kings mentioned is "**Arioch**" whose name means, "lion-like" and is said to be the "**king of Ellasar.**"

"**Ellasar**" was a major city located in lower Babylon, between Ur and Erech, on the left bank of the Euphrates River where it was the center of sun worship and the Babylonian form of the city's name was Larsa.

The third king mentioned who is the leader of this eastern confederacy is "**Chedorlaomer**" according to Genesis 14:5, 17 and who Moses identifies as

the “**king of Elam**” and whose name means, “servant of the god Logomar.”

“**Elam**” was located east of Babylonia or Mesopotamia with Susa (Hebrew: Shushan) as their capital.

In the ancient world, “**Elam**” was known as “Persia” and is now known today as “Iran” and possessed a wealth of natural resources such as metals, stone and wood and its location on the way to sources of coveted materials such as lapis lazuli and tin, made her an indispensable asset to the economy of Mesopotamia.

Genesis 10:22 identifies the Elamites as descendants of Shem.

The fourth and final eastern king mentioned in Genesis 14:1 is “**Tidal**” who Moses identifies as the “**king of Goiim**” and whose name is a Hittite royal name, which means, “great son.”

As we noted in our study of Genesis 10:15, the Hittites were the descendants of “**Heth**” who was one of the sons of “**Canaan**” and they settled in the area of what is now known as Turkey.

“**Goiim**” in the Hebrew literally means, “Gentile nations,” indicating that possibly a confederacy of Hittite cities were involved in this invasion of the Dead Sea area or more than likely, a tribe of northeastern Babylonia.

Genesis 14:2, “that they (Eastern kings: Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim) **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 (that is, Zoar).”**

So the four eastern kings took military action against five kings who rebelled against them and whose rulership was in the area of the Dead Sea.

This is the first mention of war in the Bible but not necessarily the first war.

As a result of the Lord confounding the universal language of the human race at the Tower of Babel, nations could not understand each other. Couple this with the fact that the entire human possesses a sin nature (Rm. 5:12-19) and are deceived by the

devil (1 Jn. 5:19), nations have gone to war against one another.

Nations go to war against one another because they first of all, seek to live independently of God.

Secondly, they go to war against one another because they do not understand each other and thirdly, because they are inherently selfish in their pursuit to have dominion over each other.

The first Dead Sea king mentioned in Genesis 14:2 is the “**king of Sodom**” who is “**Bera**” and whose name means, “triumph, victor.”

“**Sodom**” was located on the south end of the Dead Sea along with “**Gomorrah**.”

The king of “**Gomorrah**” was “**Birsha**” whose name means, “iniquity.”

As we noted in Genesis 13:10, “**Sodom**” and “**Gomorrah**” were located in the Dead Sea area of the Jordan Valley.

“The valley of the Jordan” was a tropical area between Jericho and Zoar, 800 to 1200 feet below sea level, where crops could grow all year-round.

Like the rich delta of the Nile area in Egypt, the valley of the Jordan was well-watered land stretching to Zoar at the southeast end of the Dead Sea.

Today, the valley of the Jordan is no longer a green, well-watered land since the Lord’s judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah brought a drastic change to the entire area.

The third Dead Sea king mentioned in Genesis 14:2 is “**Shinab, king of Admah**.”

The name “**Shinab**” means, “the moon god, Sin, is father” and the city, which he ruled “**Admah**” was a southern border city of the land of Canaan, located in the same area as “**Sodom, Gomorrah**” and “**Zeboiim**.”

The fourth Dead Sea king mentioned in Genesis 14:2 is “**Shemeber king of Zeboiim**.”

The name “**Shemeber**” means, “the name is mighty” and the city, which he ruled “**Zeboiim**” was situated near the southern end of the Dead Sea in an area presently covered by water.

The name of the fifth and final Dead Sea king is not given but his dominion was “**Bela**,” the name of which means, “destruction” and Moses identifies as being “**Zoar**.”

“Zoar” was a small town situated on the south or southeast of the Dead Sea and was the only one of the five cities of the valley or plain that were not destroyed by fire in God’s judgment recorded in Genesis 19:24-28 and is the town to which Lot escaped from the coming judgment (Gen. 19:20-23, 30).

The fact that Moses gives the name of “**Bela**” in his day indicates that his information was based on a precise historical source.

Genesis 14:3, “All these came as allies to the valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).”

Genesis 14:3 records that these five Dead Sea kings made an alliance. They joined forces at the “**valley of Siddim, which is the Salt Sea**,” which we know today as the “Dead Sea.”

The “**valley of Siddim**” was at the southern end of the Dead Sea since Genesis 14:3 relates it to the Salt Sea, insinuating their proximity to each other or even that the Dead Sea was once the valley of Siddim.

Further indicating that this valley was at the southern end of the Dead Sea is that the Table of Nations in Genesis 10 connects the cities of the valley with the southeastern border of Canaan (Gen. 10:19).

Lastly, Abram could see the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah from Hebron, which would have been easily possible if the valley was south of the Dead Sea.

Some dispute this stating that Genesis 13:10 and forward record Lot settling in the Jordan Valley, a location otherwise cited as being northeast of the Dead Sea (1 Kgs. 7:46; 2 Chr. 4:17) but the Jordan Valley stretched to the southeast end of the Dead Sea.

The Dead Sea is called the Salt Sea because its average 32 percent saline content is about ten times more than the 3 percent average of the oceans.

The Hebrew name “**Siddim**” is derived from a term meaning, “to drag” or “to plow” indicating that this valley was extremely fertile and was likely a flat and open plain, making it a suitable place for this battle between the Dead Sea kings and the Eastern kings.

Genesis 14:4

“Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but the thirteenth year they rebelled.”

Genesis 14:4 records that the five Dead Sea kings were vassals of Chedorlaomer, the head of the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition for twelve years and in the thirteenth year they rebelled indicating that this Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition had come into the region earlier and had placed the Dead Sea kings under tribute.

Genesis 14:5-12 records the defeat of these Dead Sea kings by the Eastern kings. This battle had a major impact on Abram since these Eastern kings captured Lot his nephew who lived in the Dead Sea area.

Genesis 14:5, “In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him, came and defeated the Rephaim (“giants”) in Ashteroth-karnaim and the Zuzim (“roving creatures”) in Ham and the Emim (“terrors”) in Shaveh-kiriathaim.”

The invasion of the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition first destroyed all the tribes north, east and then west of the Dead Sea before it reached the Dead Sea rebellion of the five kings for the purpose of eliminating the possibility of an attack from the rear while they were occupied with the five Dead Sea kings.

The first tribe that the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition defeated was the “**Rephaim**” who lived in Canaan and east of the Jordan (Gen. 15:20; Josh. 12:4; 13:12; 17:15) and were of giant stature, such as the king of Bashan (Deut. 3:11, 13).

Several groups were regarded as Rephaim, including the Anakim, Emim and Zamzummim (Deut. 2:10-22).

Genesis 14:5 records the “**Rephaim**” as being located in “**Ashteroth-karnaim**,” which was named for the two-horned image of the goddess Astarte or Ishtar and was located about twenty

miles east of the Sea of Galilee on the “King’s Highway” in what is now known as Syria.

The second group was called the “Zuzim” who are the same as the “Zamzummim” (Deut. 2:20) and were also of giant stature, located in “Ham,” which was a territory later occupied by Ammon, somewhere in the Transjordan, between Bashan and Moab.

The “**Rephaim**” and the “**Zamzummim**” were possibly tribes of the Anakim (“giants”), who were descended from Anak, the son of Arba (Josh. 15:13).

The third group was “Emim” which was located in “Shaveh-kiriathaim,” which was in Moab, southeast of the Dead Sea, in the vicinity of Zoar, which today is Jordan.

Genesis 14:6, “and the Horites in their Mount Seir, as far as El-paran, which is by the wilderness.”

The “**Horites**” who were located in “**Mount Seir**” were the next group defeated by the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition. They were cave dwellers and were driven out of their land by Esau’s descendants, the Edomites and were displaced by them (Deut. 2:12, 22).

The name “**El Paran**” means, “the terebinth of Paran” and was located on the border of the Sinai desert whereas “**Mount Seir**” was located southeast of the Dead Sea along the Arabah.

Genesis 14:7, “Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and conquered all the country of the Amalekites (“dwellers in a valley”), and also the Amorites (“mountaineers”), who lived in Hazazon-tamar.”

Genesis 14:7 records that the Five Eastern Kings circled back west to “**En-mishpat**,” which means, “well of judgment” and was later called “**Kadesh**” (“holy”), an oasis about seventy miles southwest of the Dead Sea.

“Kadesh” is also called “Kadesh-Barnea” and was located west of Israel’s western boundary, the River of Egypt or the Wadi el-Arish, in the southwest Negev.

The Five Eastern Kings also conquered the territory of the “**Amalekites**,” who lived primarily

in the Negev and the “**Amorites**” who lived in “**Hazazon-tamar**,” which was the west side of the Dead Sea.

Genesis 14:8, “And the king of Sodom and the king of Gomorrah and the king of Admah and the king of Zeboiim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) came out; and they arrayed for battle against them in the valley of Siddim.”

Genesis 14:9, “against Chedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goiim and Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar -- four kings against five.”

Genesis 14:10, “Now the valley of Siddim was full of tar pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and they fell into them. But those who survived fled to the hill country.”

Genesis 14:8-10 records that the Four Eastern Kings defeated the Five Dead Sea Kings decisively and were routed, falling into the tar pits in the Valley of Siddim as they were fleeing the battle.

“**Tar**” refers to a dark, bituminous substance that in ancient times was used as cement and mortar.

Genesis 14:10 records that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and their armies fell into these tar pits, which was part of the Lord’s judgment upon these two cities.

Notice, that before these two cities were completely destroyed, they were first defeated on the battlefield. The Lord Jesus Christ who controls history gave these Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings victory on the battlefield over the Five Dead Sea Kings since these Dead Sea Kings were under judgment for their gross immorality and wickedness.

2 Chronicles 20:15, “Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, “Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.”

1 Samuel 17:46, 47

“This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead

bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.”

“and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands.”

Genesis 14:11

“Then they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food supply, and departed.”

Genesis 14:11 records that the Four Eastern Kings led by Chedorlaomer plundered the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

“**Goods**” is the noun *r^ekhush* (vWbr+) (rek-oosh), which refers to “possessions,” which in the context of war would include women, children, servants and prisoners of war as well as the goods, outfittings, and equipment of the defeated army, which are part of the spoil gathered by the victorious army.

Genesis 14:12, “They also took Lot, Abram's nephew, and his possessions and departed, for he was living in Sodom.”

Lot and his possessions were part of the spoils of war for these Four Eastern Kings. Lot is in the wrong place at the wrong time simply because he is out of the “geographical” will of God, which means that he is not in the place where God wants him to be, which was to be with Abram.

There is a specific geographical location where God wants us to be in order to perform that which He has planned for us from eternity past. Just as we studied in Genesis 12 where Abram was out of the geographical will of God by going down to Egypt to solve the problem of famine in the land of Canaan so in Genesis 13, Lot is out of the geographical will of God by separating from his uncle Abram.

When we are not in the geographical will of God we are in danger and will suffer the consequences just as Lot suffered the consequences for not being in the place that the Lord wanted him to be.

Lot is under divine discipline as manifested in that he is made a prisoner of war.

Lot's decision to leave Abram is another manifestation that he is “backsliding” or in “apostasy” or in “reversionism” meaning he is disobedient and negative towards the will of God and is under divine discipline.

Abram stayed in the land of promise and the place of blessing, obedient to the Lord and thus in fellowship with Him whereas Lot has settled in an evil place, which is the result of his disobedience and prevents him from experiencing fellowship with the Lord.

The capture of Lot teaches that when a believer is out of fellowship with the Lord and backsliding or in reversionism or apostasy, he will be severely disciplined by the Lord, which is an expression of the Lord's love for the believer.

The Lord disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father's will.

The Lord disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

Hosea 8:7, “For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind.”

Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not punish us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God (Heb. 12:5-11).

Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

Hebrews 12:6, “FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Job 5:17-18, “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Genesis 14:13-16

Genesis 14:13-16 records Abram’s defeat of the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings and the subsequent rescue of his nephew, Lot.

Genesis 14:13, “Then a fugitive came and told Abram the Hebrew. Now he was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner, and these were allies with Abram.”

“A fugitive” is the noun *palit* (fyllP*) (paw-leet), which refers to one who escaped capture by the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings.

“Told” is the verb *naghadh* (dg^n*) (naw-gad), which in the hiphil (causative) stem means that this particular person who escaped capture, “caused” Abram to be informed concerning the details of the battle between the two coalitions and more importantly, he gave him the details concerning the capture of his nephew, Lot.

The fact that this particular individual knew Lot and went directly to Abram to inform him of Lot’s capture indicates that both Lot and Abram were famous in the Dead Sea region.

“The Hebrew” is the articular form of the proper noun *ivri* (yr!b+u!) (iv-ree), which designates that Abram was a legitimate and well-known descendant of Shem through Eber and was therefore, in the Messianic line, or the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15.

The term “**Hebrew**” denotes Abram’s nationality in contrast with other nationalities in the land of Canaan (cf. Gen. 43:32; Ex. 1:15; 2:11; 21:2) and the contrast in Genesis 14:13 is with the Amorites who are about to named who inhabited in the land of Canaan.

“**He was living**” is the qal active participle form of the verb *shakhan* (/k^v*) (shaw-kan), which refers to occupying a location on a temporary basis, thus indicating that Abram was “temporarily” pitching his tents by the oaks of Mamre, which is where we last saw Abram in Genesis 13:18 after Lot left him.

“**Mamre**” was located in “**Hebron**” as indicated by the phrase “**which are in Hebron**” in Genesis 13:18 and received its name from its owner, Mamre, who was a chief of the Amorites who sought security in an alliance with Abram and was blessed because of Abram (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24).

The “**oaks of Mamre**” evidently were a grove of terebinth trees that was owned by Mamre, which was the location of Abram’s encampment when he came up from Egypt according to Genesis 13:18, 14:13 and 18:1.

The three brothers “**Mamre, Eshcol**” and “**Aner**” were the heads of aristocratic families in Hebron and were bound by treaty with Abram as indicated by the phrase “**these (Mamre, Eshcol, Aner) were allies.**”

Genesis 14:14

“When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men (in war), born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan (“a judge”).”

There were two reasons why Abram was willing to risk a war with the Eastern Coalition of Mesopotamia Kings and retaliation from them.

The first is that he loved his nephew Lot and the second was that he trusted in the promises that the Lord made to him in Genesis 12:1-3 and 13:14-17 and thus knew without a doubt that the Lord who controls history would give him the victory on the battlefield.

Because of these promises, Abram had a personal sense of destiny meaning he was confident that the Lord was with him and would prosper him, giving him the victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

Abram and his 318 night rangers and Amorite allies employ all the elements and display all the characteristics that are essential to achieve victory

in a military campaign: (1) Strategy (2) Boldness (3) Surprise (4) Economy of force (5) Organization (6) Speed (7) Courage (8) Intelligence (9) Determination (10) Initiative.

“**Relative**” is the noun *ʾach* (jā*) (awkh), which denotes the biological relationship between males and is ascribed to Lot and denotes the biological relationship that he has with Abram and according to Genesis 11:27, Lot was Abram’s nephew.

Abram chose those servants who were born in his house rather than those who were purchased since the former would rank close enough to family members to be entrusted with great responsibilities (Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, page 59).

The 318 men that Abram deployed to fight the Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings and their armies is reminiscent of Gideon and his three hundred night rangers who defeated 135,000 Midianites in a night raid as recorded in Judges 7-8.

Notice, that Abram is prepared for this battle since his men are “**trained**” for military combat, thus revealing an essential principle for victory in both the military and spiritual realm, which is preparation. In the same way, the soldier of Christ Jesus must be aware of the fact that he is in enemy territory, i.e., the devil’s world and must be prepared for spiritual combat at any time and any place.

1 Peter 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Napoleon Bonaparte, “An army should be ready every day, every night, and at all times of the day and night, to oppose all resistance of which it is capable” (The Military Maxims of Napoleon, page 57).

Also, notice the phrase “**he (Abram) went in pursuit (of the enemy)**,” indicating that Abram goes immediately on the offensive against the enemy, which is another important principle for victory in both the military and spiritual realm. Just as the soldier in the natural realm must go on the offensive to accomplish victory over the enemy by utilizing his weapons and tactics so the soldier of Christ must utilize the Word of God and

prayer and the spiritual tactics listed by Paul in Ephesians 6:10-18.

“**Dan**” was located in Gilead south of Damascus, Syria (Deut. 34:1) and is a modernization of the earlier name, Laish (Judg. 18:29), having extensive fortifications, representing the northern extremity of Palestine (Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20).

Genesis 14:15, “**He divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them, and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus.**”

Also, Abram is employing another sound military tactic in that since his army is inferior in numbers to the Eastern Coalition, he avoids general action and employs a surprise attack.

Napoleon Bonaparte, “When an army is inferior in number, inferior in cavalry and in artillery, it is essential to avoid general action” (The Military Maxims of Napoleon, page 58).

“**Divided**” is the verb *chalaq* (ql^j*) (khaw-lak), which in the niphil (reflexive) stem means that Abram divided his forces into military units, demonstrating he is organized in his plan of attack.

Just as the military commander in the natural realm must be organized in his thinking in formulating a plan of attack on the enemy to achieve victory so the soldier of Christ Jesus must be organized in his thinking, applying the appropriate doctrinal rationales in the Word of God against the enemy to achieve victory over them.

More than, likely, as in the case with Gideon’s confrontation with the Midianites, Abram divided his 318 men and the army of the three Amorite princes and deployed them so that they surrounded the armies of the Eastern Coalition under the cover of darkness, making for a perfect surprise attack.

The armies of the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition undoubtedly were enjoying the spoils of their resounding and complete victory over the armies of the Dead Sea Coalition and were in no way prepared for a surprise attack. Once Abram’s night rangers attacked these armies, there would be total and complete confusion in the ranks of the Eastern Coalition armies, resulting in a disorganized retreat from the region.

Genesis 14:15 records that Abram's 318 night rangers and the army of the three Amorites princes routed the armies of the Eastern Coalition of Mesopotamia, as indicated by the "**defeated**," driving them completely out of the Dead Sea region and Canaan, as far as north of Damascus, Syria.

Though possessing inferior numbers to the Eastern Coalition of Mesopotamian Kings, Abram courageously and boldly and cunningly attacks them, routing them, even pushing them out of the region of Canaan, to the north of Damascus, Syria.

Abram's faith in the Lord produced courage and boldness in the face of great danger, which are essential characteristics to possess for both military and spiritual victory.

Ephesians 6:19, "and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel."

Abram is walking by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

Abram's military victory is preceded by his spiritual victory in his soul where he overcomes fear and trusts in the Lord despite his fears.

Psalms 56:3, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You."

Genesis 14:16

"He brought back all the goods, and also brought back his relative Lot with his possessions, and also the women, and the people."

The Lord rewarded Abram's faith in Him by giving him a total and complete victory and the restoration of his nephew Lot, his possessions, the women and the rest of the prisoners of war.

This military victory over a numerically superior force brought great increased Abram's stature and reputation in the land of Canaan and among the surrounding heathen nations and brought glory not only to Abram but also to the Lord who gave him the victory.

Abram's faith appropriated the omnipotence of the Lord, which gave him the victory on the battlefield and the recovery of his nephew Lot in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds.

Matthew 17:20, "And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.'"

Abram's victory by appropriating the Lord's power through his faith in the Lord reveals a principle that is true in both the natural and spiritual realms: Victory or defeat in warfare is gained by the application of power and the withdrawal of the inferior force (The Invisible War, Donald Grey Barnhouse).

1 John 4:4, "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He (God) who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world."

Although the Lord was not visible in this battle, it was He that gave Abram this great victory against overwhelming odds.

Proverbs 21:31, "The horse is prepared for the day of battle, but victory belongs to the LORD."

Genesis 14:17-20 records Abram's encounter with Melchizedek after his great victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings and his deliverance of his nephew Lot.

Genesis 14:17, "Then after his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley)."

A comparison of Genesis 14:17 and Hebrews 7:1 indicates that not only did Abram and his allies defeat the Eastern Mesopotamia Coalition but they "slaughtered" them.

Hebrews 7:1, "For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter (Greek noun *kope*) of the kings and blessed him."

Genesis 14:17 records that the five defeated Dead Sea kings, who were unbelievers, went out to meet Abram after his defeat of the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings, and Genesis 14:18 records that the King of Salem, Melchizedek, a believer, did as well.

Genesis 14:21 records that the Dead Sea Coalition led by Bera, the King of Sodom came to Abram empty handed and ungrateful and were preoccupied with and pretentiously demanding some of the spoils of Abram's victory, which demonstrated their extreme wickedness and involvement with evil.

The five defeated Dead Sea kings come out to meet Abram in the sense of "confronting" him since they ungratefully and pretentiously demanding some of the spoils of Abram's victory instead of thanking him for getting back their possessions and people who were taken as prisoners of war.

"**The King's Valley**" was located a quarter of a mile east of Jerusalem and this is confirmed by 2 Samuel 18:18, which records that Absalom built for himself a marble pillar in the King's Valley and Josephus says that it was built a quarter of a mile from Jerusalem (Antiquities 7.10.13).

As we studied in Genesis 14:13-16, Abram pursued the Eastern Coalition as far as Hobah, which was north of Damascus, Syria.

Now, in Genesis 14:17, Abram returns from this great victory and is heading back to where he started his pursuit, the oaks of Mamre, which was in Hebron and on the way back, he would have stopped at Jerusalem, which in Abram's day was called "**Salem**" and would be on his way back.

Genesis 14:18

"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High."

The name "**Melchizedek**" means, "king of righteousness," or "my king is righteous" since it is a compound word composed of the noun *melekh* (El#m#), "king" and the noun *tsedheq* (qd#x#), "righteousness."

Melchizedek is identified as the "**king of Salem**" or literally, the "king of peace."

The name "**Salem**" means, "peace" in the sense of security and prosperity and was the older name of Jerusalem according to Psalm 76:2.

Psalm 76:2, "His tabernacle is in Salem; His dwelling place also is in Zion."

Therefore, since his name means, "king of righteousness" and Melchizedek was the king of Salem, which means, "peace," he is a type of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who is both the King of Righteousness and Peace.

He also foreshadows the result of our Lord's substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross, which is recorded in Psalm 85:10.

Psalm 85:10, "Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Melchizedek was both a king and a priest according to Genesis 14:18, which typifies or foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who is both a king and our Great High Priest.

The fact that Melchizedek held these two offices and was a priest with a throne foreshadows our Great High Priest who is the king of kings and Lord of lords as well as a Prophet.

Psalm 110:4 teaches that Jesus Christ's royal priesthood is according to the order of Melchizedek rather than the Levitical order since the Lord was from the tribe of Judah.

Psalm 110:1-5

"The LORD says to my Lord: 'Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet.'"

"The LORD will stretch forth Your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of Your enemies.'"

"Your people will volunteer freely in the day of Your power; In holy array, from the womb of the dawn, Your youth are to You as the dew."

"The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'"

Hebrews 5:6, 10 and 6:20 quotes Psalm 110:4 teaching that Psalm 110:4 speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ whose Great High Priesthood is superior to

the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood since it is according to the order of Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7 gives us more details concerning Melchizedek and also teaches that Melchizedek and his priesthood typify the Lord Jesus Christ and His Great High Priesthood.

The Scriptures teach that Melchizedek was “not” an angel, or some superhuman creature, nor was he a manifestation of the preincarnate Christ (Christophany or Theophany) but rather, Melchizedek was an historical human being, who was an historical king and priest, who lived in an historical city.

Hebrews 7:1-3

“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham as he was returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him.”

“to whom also Abraham apportioned a tenth part of all the spoils, was first of all, by the translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then also king of Salem, which is king of peace.”

“Without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.”

“**Without father**” is the adjective *apator* (a)pavtwr), which means that there was no record of who Melchizedek’s father was and does “not” mean that he did not have a human father as was the case with the Lord Jesus Christ.

“**Without mother**” is the adjective *amator* (a)mhvwr), which means that there was no record of who Melchizedek’s mother was and does “not” mean that he did not have a mother, otherwise, how could he have been born, even the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ had a human mother, Mary.

“**Without genealogy**” is the adjective *agenealogetos* (a)genealovgtho\$) parallels the expression *me genealogoumenos* (mhV genealogouvmeno\$), “**one whose genealogy is not traced**” in Hebrews 7:6 and indicates that

there was no record of the genealogy of Melchizedek.

In Israel, you could not be a priest unless you came from the tribe of Levi and this had to be demonstrated by genealogy according to Ezra 2:61-63 and Nehemiah 7:63-65.

Personal genealogy was a prerequisite for the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood, thus they preserved with great care their pedigree. But in contradistinction from them, Melchizedek was priest of an order where natural descent was not regarded, an order free from restrictions of the Levitical (Nm. 3:10). Therefore, Melchizedek was an accurate type of Christ who did not belong to the tribe of Levi but rather of Judah.

The phrase “**having neither the beginning of days nor end of life**” means that there was no record of the beginning of Melchizedek’s service as a priest nor the end of his service and does “not” mean that he was eternal like the Lord Jesus Christ.

In order to understand the meaning of this statement we must understand that the writer is making a contrast with the Levitical priesthood. The Levitical priests began their “days” as priests at the age of twenty-five (Nm. 8:24; cf. 1 Ch. 23:27-28) and at the age of thirty they began their regular priestly duties (Nm. 4:3).

At the age of fifty their priestly “life” ended as indicated by the phrase “**But at the age of fifty years they shall retire from service in the work and not work any more**” in Numbers 8:25.

The statement “**having neither the beginning of days nor end of life**” in Hebrews 7:3 indicates that Melchizedek did “not” have these restrictions, therefore, he was an accurate type of Christ.

The phrase “**like the Son of God**” indicates that Melchizedek was not the Lord Jesus Christ but rather he was “like” Him since the verb *aphomoioo*, “to make like” is employed in Hebrews 7:3 to describe Melchizedek. Being someone and being like someone are two entirely different things.

The meaning of the phrase “**he (Melchizedek) remains a priest perpetually**” does “not” mean that Melchizedek is still alive and holding the

office of priest but rather it means that he served in his priesthood till the day of his death since he had no restrictions on the length of his service as the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood did.

Hebrews 7:4, “Now observe how great this man was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils.”

Hebrews 7:4 teaches that Melchizedek was superior to Abraham in terms of rank and authority since he was the priest of God, which was demonstrated in that Abraham gave a tenth of the choicest spoils to Melchizedek.

Hebrews 7:5-7

“And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham.”

“But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises.”

“But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater.”

Hebrews 7:5-7 teaches that since Melchizedek did not originate from the tribe of Levi in Israel and collected a tenth of the choicest spoils from Abraham and blessed Abraham demonstrates the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham and thus the Levitical priesthood, which descended from Levi through Abraham.

Hebrews 7:8-10

“In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on.”

“And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes.”

“for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.”

Hebrews 7:9-10 teaches that the Levitical priesthood was inferior to the priesthood of Melchizedek since the former descended from Levi through Abraham and we noted that Melchizedek held a higher rank and authority in

the kingdom of God than did Abraham and received tithes from Abraham.

The fact that the priesthood of Melchizedek was superior to the Aaronic or Levitical priesthood foreshadows the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ's Great High Priesthood over the High Priesthood of Aaron and the Levitical priesthood.

Hebrews 7:11-17

“Now if perfection was through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the people received the Law), what further need was there for another priest to arise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be designated according to the order of Aaron?”

“For when the priesthood is changed, of necessity there takes place a change of law also.”

“For the one concerning whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no one has officiated at the altar.”

“For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, a tribe with reference to which Moses spoke nothing concerning priests.”

“And this is clearer still, if another priest arises according to the likeness of Melchizedek.”

“who has become such not on the basis of a law of physical requirement, but according to the power of an indestructible life.”

“For it is attested of Him, ‘YOU ARE A PRIEST FOREVER ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK.’”

The term “**another**” also indicates that Melchizedek is not the Lord Jesus Christ since the Greek adjective that it translates *heteros* (ε%τετρο%) expresses a qualitative difference between Jesus Christ and Melchizedek and denotes “another of a different kind.”

Therefore, the Lord Jesus Christ's great high priesthood was another of a different kind than Melchizedek's.

The prepositional phrase “**according to the likeness of Melchizedek**” also indicates that the Lord Jesus Christ was “not” Melchizedek but rather that He was “similar,” or “like” (Greek noun

homoioites, “similarity or correspondence between Melchizedek and Jesus Christ) Melchizedek.

The king-priest Melchizedek prefigures the Lord Jesus Christ in His Great High Priesthood and looks forward to the millennial reign of Christ when the Lord Jesus as a result of His death, resurrection, session and 2nd Advent will reign as a King-Priest over the earth bodily in Jerusalem (Zech. 6:12-15) and at that time, “**righteousness and peace**” will have “**kissed each other**” (Ps. 85:10).

The “**bread**” brought by Melchizedek, the priest of God Most High portrayed the sinless human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ whereas the “**wine**” portrayed His substitutionary spiritual death.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread.”

“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

“In the same way {He took} the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink {it} in remembrance of Me.’”

The combination of bread and wine also refers to the fact that Melchizedek prepared a dinner banquet for the soldiers of the Abrahamic Coalition (cf. 2 Sam. 17:27-29; Prov. 9:5).

While, the Dead Sea Kings come empty handed and ungrateful, Genesis 14:19-20 records that the King of Salem, Melchizedek brought bread and wine for Abram’s troops and for the armies of the Amorite princes who were allied with Abram.

Melchizedek goes out to meet Abram in the sense of “greeting” him, which is demonstrated by the fact that he provides food for the victorious armies of Abram and the three Amorite princes that were allied with Abram.

Melchizedek is grateful and does “not” come empty handed whereas the Dead Sea Kings are ungrateful and come empty handed.

Genesis 14:19-20 records Melchizedek blessing Abram and Abram in turn presents a tithe to Melchizedek.

Genesis 14:19

“He blessed him and said, ‘Blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.’”

“**Blessed**” is the passive form of the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which indicates that the Lord who is the Creator of heaven and earth endued Abram with power so that he was victorious over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

The statement “**blessed be Abram of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth**” denotes the intimate covenant relationship between the Creator and Abram as indicated by the Hebrew verb *qanah*, which means, “Creator” although it is translated “**possessor**” in the New American Standard.

Genesis 14:20, “And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand. He gave him a tenth of all.”

“**Blessed**” is the passive voice of the verb *barakh* (Ir^B*) (bah-rach), which is used to “praise” the Lord for His sovereignty over the nations and giving Abram the victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition and denotes the covenant relationship between Abram and the Lord.

The statement “**blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies in your hand**” refers to the fact that the Son of God controls history and therefore, the circumstances of Abram so that he was given the victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

In Genesis 14:19-20, we see that Melchizedek as the priest of God, mediates God’s power and protection by placing God’s name on Abram (see Num. 6:22-27; 1 Ch. 16:2) inferring that Melchizedek is superior in rank and authority to Abram.

Melchizedek reminds Abram that his victory was the result of the Lord delivering the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition into his hands and did not originate from his own human power or prowess as a military commander or the fighting capability of his troops. He also reminds Abram

that not only is Abram's God the Creator and origin of all things but also the Master of Circumstances and the source of his victory in the face of his trials and tribulations on earth.

The tithe given by Abram to Melchizedek was a form of taxation levied by rulers.

In Genesis 14:20, Melchizedek comes out to congratulate Abram for his victory and remind him of who was the source of his victory and "not" to collect the tithe whereas Abram gives the tithe to Melchizedek recognizing his legitimate authority over him and does this willingly rather than from obligation.

"The tithe given by Abram to Melchizedek is a one time tithe of the booty (cf. Num. 31:25-41), not the annual tithe to the priest (cf. Lev. 27:30-33; Num. 18:21)" (Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, A Commentary, page 235).

Church age believers are "never" commanded to tithe but are to give to the Lord like Abram, willingly and in thanksgiving rather than from obligation.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7

"Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

"Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

The fact that Abram gave a tenth of the choicest spoils of his victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition to Melchizedek indicates that Abram recognized Melchizedek's authority and rank and expressed his appreciation and gratefulness to the Lord who gave him the victory on the battlefield.

Genesis 14:21-24 records Abram's rejection with an oath, the King of Sodom's offer to keep the booty from his victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

Genesis 14:21, "The king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.'"

Genesis 14:22, "Abram said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.'"

Genesis 14:23, "that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

Genesis 14:24, "I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share."

The fact that the King of Sodom came empty handed and demanding that Abram give the people to him rather honoring and praising him as Melchizedek did reflects the King of Sodom's wicked and ungrateful heart.

The King of Sodom's proposal is wrong because of his audacity and ungrateful attitude. The victor, who was Abram, has the right to stipulate the disposition of the spoils of war and not a defeated king, which is what the King of Sodom was.

Unlike Melchizedek, the King of Sodom is deceitful and begrudging and does not greet Abram with joy and thanksgiving.

If Melchizedek is a type of Christ, then the King of Sodom is a type of Satan since they are a total and complete contrast from each other.

As a result of seeing the King of Sodom's attitude towards him after Abram bailed him out and the other Dead Sea Kings, Abram discerns that it would be dangerous dealing with the King of Sodom. Abram would have been tempted to reason that God was seeking to bless him by means of this offer from the King of Sodom but he could not bring himself to equate the blessing of God with the King of Sodom's offer. This offer from the King of Sodom was a test of Abram's faith.

Some of the greatest tests for a believer as in the case of Abram are after experiencing a great victory whether in the spiritual or natural realm. It is tempting to get arrogant and forget that one's success as a believer originates from the blessing of God rather than one's own power and ability.

Undoubtedly, Abram knew about the wickedness of King Bera and the city of Sodom and thus he felt that if he kept the booty from the city of

Sodom it would make him subject to Bera but Abram looks beyond the visible and temporal and looks forward to the invisible and real and eternal.

Abram was looking forward in faith to the fulfillment of the Lord's promises to him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-13 and 13:14-17.

"Faith looks beyond the riches of this world to the grander prospects God has in store" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary-Old Testament, page 54, Victor Books).

Abram was confident that he would become prosperous materially and financially because he trusted in the promises that the Lord had made to him to prosper him materially and financially.

Anything that he possessed, he wanted to come from the Lord rather than from those living in the cosmic system of Satan.

Abram will "not" compromise with the cosmic system of Satan and to accept this offer from the King of Sodom would have been a compromise with the cosmic system of Satan.

Abram did "not" accept this offer from the King of Sodom because he did not love the cosmic system in the sense of honoring this offer from the King.

Believers are prohibited from loving the cosmic system of Satan in the sense of honoring its temptations.

1 John 2:15-17

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

"**World**" is the noun *kosmos* and is used of a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults and the occult dominated and negatively

affected by Satan who is god of this satanic cosmos.

This system is promoted by Satan, conformed to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to God the cause of Christ. This world system is used to seduce men away from God and the person of Christ and is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible, and very anti-humanity though it often appears as humanitarian as part of Satan's masquerade as an angel of light.

James 4:4, "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."

Satan has incorporated into his system of world rulership as many material distractions as possible.

Affluence, the increase and spread of wealth, communication and technology are factors, which, from one point of view, are very beneficial to the devil's control of mankind.

In Genesis 14:21-24, we see that Abram is not distracted by the pursuit of materialism and wealth because he does "not" love money and affluence and this is demonstrated in that he rejects the King of Sodom's offer to take the property of Sodom.

Prosperity can be very dangerous and destructive to a believer's spiritual growth. By rejecting the offer from the King of Sodom, Abram is not permitting the pursuit of material and financial prosperity to stop his spiritual growth as a believer.

We are to be living our lives in light of eternity and this is what we see Abram doing in Genesis 14:21-24. Though in the world, we are to be both unstained by the world and separated from it and its way of life while also penetrating the world as ambassadors of Christ, as those holding forth the Word of life (cf. Jam. 1:27; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; with Phil. 2:12-18; Matt. 5:14-16; 2 Cor. 5:20-21).

In Genesis 14:21-24, we see Abram separated from the cosmic system and its way of life while at the same time presenting a powerful witness to the unbeliever by rejecting this offer and resting in the promises that the Lord made to him.

Our trust, therefore, is not to be in the uncertain riches of this age nor in the things in which men glory (1 Tim. 6:17-19; John 5:41; 1 Thess. 2:6) and in Genesis 14:21-24, we see that Abram does not trust in the uncertain riches of the cosmic system of Satan.

We are not be friends with this world which amounts to hostility to God and His aims (Jam. 4:4); nor are we to love the world, for loving the world and its things chokes out our ability to love God (1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 6:19-24; Mark 4:18-19). In Genesis 14:21-24, we see that Abram is a friend of God rather than a friend of the cosmic system of Satan.

We can enjoy the things God gives us in the world for He has given us all things freely to enjoy, but our security, significance, or basic satisfaction and contentment in life are to come from knowing, loving, trusting, and serving the Lord (1 Tim. 6:17; Phil. 4:11-13; Eccl. 2:24-26).

Abram does not find his security, significance and satisfaction in life and contentment in the cosmic system as witnessed by his rejecting the King of Sodom's offer but rather he finds these things from knowing, loving, trusting and serving the Lord.

1 Timothy 6:17, "Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy."

So while we can use the things in the world, we must not abuse them as one who belongs to Satan's cosmic system who seeks from the world what only the Lord can give (1 Cor. 7:29-35).

There are many passages in the New Testament, which address the believer's attitude and conduct to this present cosmic system of Satan.

Galatians 6:14, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Romans 12:1, 2

"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living

and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

The fact that we are not to love this world does not mean we are to withdraw from society and live in a monastery but rather God has separated us from the world in order that we might manifest His Son to a lost and dying world through our words and actions.

Abram is coming into contact with unbelievers, wicked and evil rulers and yet he does not hide from them but rather is manifesting the Lord to a lost and dying world through his magnanimous and gracious actions.

Bruce K. Waltke, "As conquering hero, Abraham has the right to a share of the property plundered from the king of Sodom, but he wants no share of what the pagan king offers him with a grudge. Abraham wants to be above reproach in the eyes of his pagan neighbors and he will not allow the name of his God to be tarnished by moral ambiguity" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 237).

1 Peter 2:12, "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

1 Peter 3:8-16

"To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit."

"not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing."

"For, 'THE ONE WHO DESIRES LIFE, TO LOVE AND SEE GOOD DAYS, MUST KEEP HIS TONGUE FROM EVIL AND HIS LIPS FROM SPEAKING DECEIT.'"

"HE MUST TURN AWAY FROM EVIL AND DO GOOD; HE MUST SEEK PEACE AND PURSUE IT."

“FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE TOWARD THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.”

“Who is there to harm you if you prove zealous for what is good?”

“But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED.”

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.”

“and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.”

As believers, we are not to “sell out” to the world and play by its rules but rather we are to walk in conformity with Christ. We see that Abram does “not” sell out to the cosmic system, which is manifested in that he rejects the King of Sodom’s offer.

Genesis 14:22, “Abram said to the king of Sodom, ‘I have sworn to the LORD God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth.’”

By calling *Yahweh*, “**the Lord**” by the name employed by Melchizedek in Genesis 14:19, “**the Lord God Most High** (Hebrew: *El Elyon*), **possessor** (Hebrew: *qanah*, “Creator”) **of heaven and earth,**” Abram bears testimony to the fact that his God and Melchizedek’s are one and the same Person.

Genesis 14:23, “that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, for fear you would say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’”

Abram refuses to keep a victim’s plunder and by doing so, demonstrates his spiritual character. Abram refuses the King of Sodom’s offer because he does not want the King to be able to take the credit for his prosperity, rather he wants the Lord to be responsible for his prospering materially and financially and wants to give glory to the Lord.

Genesis 14:24, “I will take nothing except what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their share.”

Abram’s own servants had partaken of the food, which the confederate kings had carried away and was unavoidable, and this is all that Abram makes claim to. On the other hand, as he had no right to prescribe the same liberal conduct to his allies, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre, he left them to claim the share that by right of conquest belonged to them of the recaptured booty.

Abram demonstrates his fairness and generosity to those who risked their lives with him (the armies of the three Amorite princes) by letting them take their share of the spoils of this great victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

Abram’s sole objective in pursuing the armies of the four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings was to rescue Lot his nephew and bring glory to the Lord and not to achieve personal glory, fame or wealth. By pursuing these Eastern Mesopotamian Kings in order to rescue his nephew Lot, Abram demonstrated that he was not concerned in the least about his own personal safety but rather was totally occupied with the safety of his nephew Lot.

Now, in Genesis 15, we see that because of Abram operating in faith and being courageous and humble, giving glory to the Lord for his victory that the Lord will bless Abram again, giving him greater revelation and expanding and enlarging upon His covenant with him.

Genesis 15

Genesis 15:1-6 records the Lord’s guarantee to Abraham that he would have a child and that his descendants would be innumerable.

Genesis 15:1, “After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.’”

“**After these things**”: (1) Adverb of time *`achar* (rj^a^a) (akh-ar), “**after**” (2) Noun *davar* (rb^*D^*), “**these things.**”

The adverb of time *`achar* denotes “when” the events of Genesis 15 took place, namely after the events of Genesis 14.

The noun *davar*, “**these things**” refers to the events of Genesis 14:1-16 where Abram and his 318 night rangers and the armies of the three Amorite princes routed the Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings and rescued Lot. It also refers to the “events” of Genesis 14:17-24 where Abram was blessed by Melchizedek and refused with an oath the King of Sodom’s offer to take the property of Sodom, and which refusal was tantamount to refusing to love the things of the cosmic system of Satan (cf. 1 Jn. 2:15-17).

The phrase “**the Word of the Lord**” is a title for the 2nd Person of the Trinity, who is God the Son.

John 1:1, “In eternity past the Word has always existed and the Word has always existed face to face with the God (the Father) and the Word has always existed as God.”

The term “**vision**” indicates Abram is receiving a visible appearance of the Son of God before His incarnation, which is called in theology, a “theophany” or “Christophany.”

This appearance of the Son of God to Abram was also auditory since the Lord speaks with Abram as seen in Genesis 15:2-5.

Also indicating the statement “**the Word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision**” is a theophany or Christophany is that Abram has a conversation with the Lord. This appearance of the preincarnate Christ to Abram indicates that Abram was a prophet according to Numbers 12:6.

Numbers 12:6, “He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.’”

The prohibition “**do not fear**” that was issued to Abram indicates that Abram was thinking about his great victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition and was fearful that they would return and attack him, thus the Lord told Abram to not be afraid.

Psalm 56:11, “In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

The Lord gives assurance to Abram that he need not be afraid because the Lord would protect him as indicated by the statement, “**I am your shield.**”

Also, the Lord told Abram to not be afraid because Abram was thinking about the fact that he had no child and this is indicated by Abraham’s question to the Lord in Genesis 15:2-3.

Assurance is freedom from doubt and is a sense of certainty that something is true that it will occur or that all is okay. In Genesis 15:1, the Lord is assuring Abram that everything is ok that he will be protected from his enemies and rewarded and in Genesis 15:4-5 he reassures him that he and Sarai would have a child.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary lists the following definitions for assurance: (1) a positive declaration intended to give confidence. (2) Pledge, guaranty, surety. (3) Full confidence; freedom from doubt, certainty. (4) Freedom from timidity; self-confidence; self-possession; firmness; courage.

Paraphrasing this definition and making application to Genesis 15:1, we can say that the promises of the Lord in a vision to Abram and which are enumerated in Genesis 15:2-5 are a positive declaration or guarantee from the Lord intended to give Abram confidence and courage.

“**Shield**” is the noun *maghen* (/g@m*), which is used in a metaphorical sense depicting the Lord as a shield to Abram in the sense of offering protection for Abram from reprisals from the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition. This metaphor is used often in Scripture representing the Lord as the Protector of His people.

Psalm 18:2, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Also, Abram was thinking about his refusal to take the property offered to him by the King of Sodom as indicated in that the Lord promises Abram that his “**reward shall be very great.**”

Therefore, the Lord is telling Abram to forget about the past and do not fear reprisals from the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition and do not worry

that you refused the King of Sodom's offer, I will reward you for your great victory.

Hebrews 6:10, "For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints."

"**Reward**" is the noun *sakhar* (rk*C*) (saw-kawr), which denotes "wages" rendered as payment for service and in the context of Genesis 15:1 denotes the "reward" that the Lord promises to give Abram for his military service and victory over the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition.

"**Very great**" is the verb *ravah* (hb*r*), which is in the hiphil infinitive absolute form functioning as an adverb and means both, "abundance" and "extraordinarily great".

Therefore, the Lord is promising Abram that his reward for his service will not only be abundant but also extraordinary.

Genesis 15:2, "Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'"

Genesis 15:3, "And Abram said, 'Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.'"

"**O Lord God**" is a term of respect and denotes Abram's awareness of and acknowledgement of his covenant relationship with the Lord and that the Lord is sovereign over his circumstances, which are weighing on Abram's mind, namely that he is still childless.

The Lord's reassuring Abram in Genesis 15:1 that He would protect and reward him, prompts Abram to think about the Lord's promises to him and his descendants in Genesis 12:1-3 and 13:14-17. Abram is of course childless at this time and so we see Abram asking the Lord if he is fulfilling these promises of descendants through his servant Eliezer who he purchased in Damascus, Syria.

Ancient documents show that if a man had no child, he could adopt a male servant or slave to be his heir. Abram had as his business manager or chief servant a slave named, "**Eliezer**" whom he acquired in Damascus on his way to Canaan. Abram thought the Lord would fulfill the promise through Eliezer, since legal inheritance was as

important as natural inheritance in the days of Abram, as archaeological discoveries at Nuzu in Mesopotamia have demonstrated but this left Abram without personal satisfaction and it brought a question to his mind. The mind of Abram had been burdened by the fact that he was still childless and thus prompts his question to the Lord.

Genesis 15:4, "Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.'"

Genesis 15:5, "And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'"

The Lord guarantees Abram that the promises would be literally fulfilled by a child of Abram's own and to drive the point home, the Lord compares the number of the stars of the universe to the number of descendants of Abram there will be in the future.

Bruce K. Waltke, "The representation of offspring like the uncountable stars is not just an amazing promise but an assurance of God's creative and sovereign power" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 242; Zondervan).

The promise of Genesis 15:4-5 not only pertains to Abram's "natural" progeny (cf. Deut. 1:10; 10:22; Heb. 11:12) but according to Romans 4 it refers to his "spiritual" progeny (cf. Gal. 3:29).

Deuteronomy 10:22, "Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven."

Galatians 3:29, "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

Genesis 15:6, "Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness."

Abram's faith in the Lord in Genesis 15:6 and the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram as a result of his faith is employed by the New Testament writers as the pattern of a sinner's justification (Rm. 4).

Romans 4:3, “For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”

“**Believed**” is the verb *`aman* (/m[^]a*) (aw-man), which is in the “hiphil” (causative) stem meaning, “to cause to have confidence in, to trust.”

The object of Abram’s faith is the Lord Himself who alone can make this guarantee to Abram because He sovereign and omnipotent and omniscient.

Although, the New Testament writers employ Genesis 15:6 to teach that justification is through faith alone in Christ alone, it does “not” mean that Genesis 15:6 records the moment when Abram first got saved.

There at least three reasons for this. First of all, Abram had already obeyed the Lord’s call to leave Ur and Haran (Acts 7:2-5; Gen. 12:1-5). Secondly, the Lord had entered into a covenant agreement with him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:4-5, which is something the Lord would never do with an unbeliever. Thirdly, the perfect tense of the verb *`aman*, “**believed**” demonstrates that Abram’s faith did “not” begin after the events recorded in Genesis 15:1-5 since it represents the state of Abram trusting in the Lord, which flowed from his initial faith in the Lord the moment he got saved in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Bible Knowledge Commentary, The Old Testament, “Abram’s faith is recorded here because it is foundational for establishing the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant did not give Abram redemption; it was a covenant made with Abram who had already believed and to whom righteousness had already been imputed” (page 55, Victor Books).

“**Reckoned**” is the verb *chashav* (bv[^]j*) (khaw-sawv), which refers to the Lord imputing His righteousness to Abram and as a result it refers to His “viewpoint” of Abram as a result of Abram’s faith in Him in delivering on His promise to give Abram a son.

Imputation is the function of the justice of God in crediting something to someone for cursing or for blessing. At the moment of spiritual birth, God imputed His righteousness to the believer so that he is “positionally” the righteousness of God

meaning God has given His righteousness as a gift to the believer and that God views the believer as righteous as Himself.

Romans 3:21, 22

“But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets.”

“even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction.”

The righteousness of God is received through faith in the gospel concerning Jesus Christ since in it (the gospel) the righteousness of God, Jesus Christ is revealed.

Romans 1:16, 17

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

“For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

The Bible teaches us that the Lord Jesus Christ is the believer’s righteousness.

1 Corinthians 1:30, “But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.”

The righteousness of God can never be attained by anyone through human power and dynamics or by keeping the Mosaic Law but rather it is received as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ who is the righteousness of God incarnate.

Romans 4:1-5

“What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?”

“For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.”

“For what does the Scripture say? ‘ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.’”

“Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due.”

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

Romans 5:17, “For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”

Genesis 15:7 records the Lord reconfirming His promise to Abram to give him the land of Canaan.

Genesis 15:7, “**And He said to him, ‘I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.’**”

The statement, “**I am the Lord**” parallels the preambles of ancient royal covenants, which included an historical prologue and “connotes the unimpeachable authority of the declaration that follows” (Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary*, page 242).

Therefore, the phrase “**I am the Lord**” expresses the unimpeachable authority of the Lord’s declaration to give Abram the land of Canaan in order to possess it.

Covenants made by kings in the days of Abram began with the king identifying himself and giving a brief historical background and this the Lord does by beginning His covenant with Abram by identifying Himself to Abram as the One who brought him out of the idolatry of Ur of the Chaldeans.

“**Ur**” was located on the Euphrates River in southern Iraq and was a thriving city in Sumerian times through the Old Babylonian period and was occupied to some degree through the Seleucid times, spanning the history of independent Mesopotamia.

Genesis 15:7 records the Lord reiterating and confirming His original promises to Abram recorded in Genesis 12:7 and Genesis 13:14-17 to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to

Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

In Genesis 15:7, the promise by the Lord to Abram to give him the land of Canaan is called in theology, the “Palestinian” covenant.

The “Palestinian” covenant is in fact an extension of the “Abrahamic” covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and 13:14-17. Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant that the Lord established with Abram denoted the Lord’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abram and his descendants. Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness.

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The prophets of Israel prophesied of the “Palestinian” covenant’s literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 16:14-16; 23:3-8; 31:8, 31-37; Ezek. 11:17-21; 20:33-38; 34:11-16; 39:25-29; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan.

The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

Genesis 15:8 records Abram’s request for a guarantee as to the means by which the Lord will give him the land of Canaan.

Genesis 15:9-11 records the provisions prescribed by the Lord and the preparations made by Abram for the ceremony in which the Lord will establish His covenant with Abram guaranteeing the land of Canaan to him and his descendants.

Genesis 15:8, “He said, ‘O Lord GOD, how may I know that I will possess it?’”

Abram’s question recorded in Genesis 15:8 was motivated by faith and was simply a question asking for more details or more accurately the specific means by which the Lord would accomplish giving him the land of Canaan.

The phrase “**how I may I know**” is incorrectly translated since it does “not” accurately convey the meaning of the Hebrew prepositional phrase *bammah* (hM*B^^e) and should actually be translated “by what specific means may I confirm.”

“**How**” is used to translate the Hebrew preposition *b^e* (B+) (pronounced beth), which means, “by means of” and is followed by the definite article *ha* (h^^e) and the interrogative *mah* (hm*), which means, “what.”

The preposition *b^e* denotes the instrument or means by which the Lord will accomplish giving the land of Canaan to Abram and which means is identified in Genesis 15:9-21.

The interrogative *mah* when employed with the preposition *b^e* means, “by what means.” The definite article *ha*, which precedes the interrogative *mah* indicates that Abram is asking the Lord to “specify” the means by which he can confirm that he will possess the land of Canaan as promised to him by the Lord.

“**I will know**” is the verb *yadha* (ud^y*), which in the context of Genesis 15:7-21 means, “to confirm” since Abram is attempting to seek confirmation from the Lord as to the means by which he can be assured that he will possess the land of Canaan.

To “confirm” means, “to acknowledge with definite assurance,” thus, Abram is seeking to “acknowledge with definite assurance” the specific means by which or how he will possess the land of Canaan.

To “confirm” also means, “to establish the truth, accuracy, validity or genuineness of, corroborate; verify,” thus, Abram is seeking “to verify” the specific means by which he will possess the land of Canaan.

Therefore, Abram’s question in Genesis 15:8 does not indicate that Abram doubted that the Lord would fulfill His promise but rather he simply asked for confirmation as to the specific means He would employ to accomplish giving Abram the land.

In Genesis 15:9-21, the Lord gives Abram quite a few details surrounding the specific means by which the Lord would bring about Abram possessing the land of Canaan.

The specific means by which the Lord will give Abram the land of Canaan would be through the unconditional covenant that the Lord initially made with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3 and 13:14-17, which would be enlarged and amplified and confirmed as demonstrated in the covenant ceremony recorded in Genesis 15:9-21.

Also, the specific means by which the Lord will give Abram the land of Canaan would be through suffering as indicated by the Lord’s prophecy in Genesis 15:13-16 that Abram’s descendants, specifically, the nation of Israel would suffer in Egypt for four hundred years before they would finally leave Egypt and then enter the land of Canaan to possess it.

Also, although not specifically mentioned but it is implied, is that it would be through resurrection from the dead that Abram would personally enter into possessing the land of Canaan, which will take place during the millennial reign of Christ.

Furthermore, the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Abram, which would be fulfilled during the millennial reign of Christ, would be accomplished by means of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross, which is portrayed in the sacrifice of the animals in the covenant ceremony.

The curse of sin could only be removed by the death of Christ, which was taught through blood animal sacrifices, which Abram practiced and thus acknowledged his need of a Savior, a Redeemer to approach God in fellowship.

This covenant with Abram in Genesis 15:7-8 is dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ and His death and resurrection, without which, this covenant could never be fulfilled.

Genesis 15:9, “So He said to him, ‘Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon.’”

In the Bible, five is the number of “grace.” Thus, the five animals Abram has to sacrifice are a picture of God’s grace, which by way of definition, is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to members of the human race based upon merits of the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross.

The fact that the heifer, female goat and ram had to be three years old indicated that they would have to be mature and the best from the flocks representing the fact that God gave His best when He sacrificed His Son on the Cross. There were no age stipulations for the birds since they do not portray the sacrificial aspect of Jesus Christ but rather that He is resurrected and this is the reason why the birds are not cut in two like the heifer, female goat and ram.

These five animals are those that were later used in the sacrifices prescribed in Leviticus 1-7: a heifer, a goat and a ram, a dove and a young pigeon. The animals represent all the offerings mentioned in Leviticus, starting with the guilt offering, the sin offering, the fellowship offering to the burnt offering, which are given in the reversed order in Leviticus and also emphasize the social status from poor to rich. Each of these animals portrays or foreshadows a distinctive aspect of Christ’s perfection and the perfection of His work on the Cross.

“**Heifer**” is the noun *`eghlah* (ZU@) (eg-law), which means, “young cow, heifer,” which were used for plowing and threshing (Judg. 14:18; Jer. 50:11; Hos. 10:11) and portrayed the servanthood of Jesus Christ.

Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

“**Female goat**” is noun *`ez* (ZU@) (aze), which portrayed the sinless human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Lev. 16:20-22; Jn. 1:29).

John 1:29, “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”

“**Ram**” is the noun *`ayil* (ly!a^) (ah-yil), which refers to a mature male sheep and portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as our Substitute who died in our place on the Cross.

Romans 5:6-8

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died as a substitute for all of us.”

“**Turtledove**” is the noun *tor* (rw{T) (tore), which were sacrificed by those who were poor and could not afford an ox or a lamb and represented the fact the Jesus Christ is unique since He is both God and Man, undiminished deity and true humanity one Person forever.

2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich (God), yet for your sake He became poor (a Man), so that you through His poverty (Christ’s humanity) might become rich (become partakers of the divine nature).”

“**Young pigeon**” is the noun *gozal* (lz*w{G) (go-zawl), which is correctly translated and was also sacrificed by those too poor to afford an ox or lamb and represented the fact that since Jesus Christ in His person is unique as the God-Man, so was His death and that He alone would be raised and seated at the Father’s right hand.

Genesis 15:10, “Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds.”

One each of the five acceptable sacrificial animals (cow, sheep, goat, pigeon, dove) was to be slain by Abram and laid on the altar. The animals sacrificed on the altar were placed in two rows, one bird in each, along with a half-portion of each of the other animals. This arrangement was evidently intended to conform to the custom of the

day, when a covenant was made between two parties. Each would pass between the rows, as a sign that he was bound by the terms of the contract (cf. Jer. 34:18-19). But in this ceremony recorded in Genesis 15:9-21, only the Lord passes between the rows informing Abram that the fulfillment of this covenant to give the land of Canaan to Abram was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the faithfulness of the Lord.

The fact that only the Lord passed through the rows indicates that God alone would accomplish the fulfillment of this covenant through the death, resurrection, session and millennial reign of His Son Jesus Christ.

The fact that Abram did not have to hunt these animals down and kill them but were ready to be used for sacrificial purposes portrays the Father’s predetermined plan to send His Son Jesus Christ to the Cross.

Acts 2:22, 23

“Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.”

“this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

Genesis 15:11, “The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away.”

The birds of prey coming down upon the carcasses of the animals portrayed the attempts of Satan and his kingdom to prevent the death of Christ and God’s plan of salvation for mankind and the fulfillment of this covenant being fulfilled during Christ’s millennial reign (cf. Rev. 12:1-6).

The fact that Abram had to drive them away portrays the need of the believer to put on the full armor of God and take up the shield of faith and be alert for the attacks of Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

1 Peter 5:8, “Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

Genesis 15:12-16 records the Lord’s prophesy of the suffering of Abram’s descendants (nation of Israel) in Egypt.

Genesis 15:12, “Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.”

The “**sun going down**” symbolizes and anticipates the declining fortunes of Abram’s descendants who were eventually enslaved in Egypt.

As we will see his descendants will be the nation of Israel who will be enslaved in Egypt for over four hundred years.

The “**deep sleep**” symbolizes and anticipates that the promise of the land would not be fulfilled until after Abram has died and been raised from the dead and inherits the land with the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ during His millennial reign.

Arthur Pink, “By this deep sleep we learn how God was showing the patriarch, symbolically, that not during his natural life would he inherit the land; instead, he must go down into the grave and inherit it together with the Promised Seed. In his awakening from this ‘deep sleep’ Abram received a veiled promise of resurrection from the dead and the horror of great darkness as of the grave (cf. Heb. 2:15) from which he recalled again to the light of day. In a word, the way of blessing, to the inheritance, was through death and resurrection” (Gleanings in Genesis, page 170, Moody Press).

The “**terror and great darkness**” symbolizes and anticipates Israel’s future enslavement and mistreatment in Israel.

Genesis 15:13, “God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.’”

“**Know for certain**”: (1) Qal infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *yadha* (yaw-daw) (2) 2nd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *yadha*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 15:13 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea. Thus indicating that the Lord wants Abram to “know for sure or for certain” that his descendants would be strangers in the land of Egypt and in fact enslaved there and oppressed for over four hundred years.

So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “knowing, you shall know” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “know for certain.”

The Lord is presenting a prophecy of the future enslavement of the nation of Israel which would be descended from Abram.

This prophecy is a revelation and based upon the Divine Decree of God. The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future of the descendants of Abram. This decree is simply a declaration of God’s sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future concerning Abram’s descendants who would be the Israelites.

The Lord knew that Abram’s descendants would be enslaved in Egypt since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history.

“**Your descendants**” is a reference to the nation of Israel and the “**land**” in which the nation of Israel would be strangers in and would be enslaved to and oppressed for four hundred years is Egypt.

“**Four hundred years**” is a “round” number for the more precise figure of four hundred thirty years appears in Exodus 12:40-41; Acts 7:6; Gal. 3:16-17.

Exodus 12:40, 41

“Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.”

“And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

Acts 7:6, “But God spoke to this effect, that his DESCENDANTS WOULD BE ALIENS IN A FOREIGN LAND, AND THAT THEY WOULD BE ENSLAVED AND MISTREATED FOR FOUR HUNDRED YEARS.”

Genesis 15:14, “**But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.**”

“**The nation**” is a clear reference to Egypt (Ex. 6:6; 7:4; 12:12).

“**I will judge the nation (Egypt)**” is a reference to the Lord judging Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt through the ten plagues for not letting Israel leave as God had commanded Pharaoh as recorded in Exodus 6-14.

Exodus 6:6, “Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.’”

Exodus 7:4, “When Pharaoh does not listen to you, then I will lay My hand on Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments.”

Exodus 12:12, “For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments -- I am the LORD.”

“**They will come out with many possessions**” was literally fulfilled as recorded in Exodus 12:35-38 and demonstrates that the Lord is just and gives retribution to those who have been unjustly treated and enslaved.

Exodus 12:35-38

“Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing.”

“and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.”

“Now the sons of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men on foot, aside from children.”

“A mixed multitude also went up with them, along with flocks and herds, a very large number of livestock.”

Genesis 15:15, “As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.”

“**You shall go to your fathers in peace**” is a figure of speech called “euphemy” by which a harsh or disagreeable expression is changed for a pleasant and agreeable one.

The Lord employs the expression “**you (Abram) shall go to your fathers in peace**” instead of the more harsh expression “die” since the Lord considers physical death an enemy, which He will destroy with the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:51-57; Heb. 2:14-15).

The term “**sleep**” is often used by the New Testament writes for death (Jn. 11:11, 13; 1 Cor. 11:30; 1 Thess. 4:14-16).

Abram would “not” see the promise of the land fulfilled in his lifetime but would have to accept the promise by means of faith and receive the fulfillment of this promise when he will be in a resurrected body during Christ’s millennial reign.

Hebrews 11:13-16

“All these (those listed in Hebrews 11:4-12: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah) died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”

“For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.”

“And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.”

“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”

Although Abram would not see the fulfillment until he was raised from the dead, the Lord assures Abram that he would enjoy a long life and would be spared the afflictions that his descendants would go through in Egypt.

The phrase “**old age**” literally means, “gray-headed” and “**good**” denotes a prosperous life (Jdg. 8:32; 1 Chr. 29:28).

Genesis 15:16, “Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

“**They**” is a reference to Abram’s descendants, namely, the Israelites who will return from the slavery of Egypt to the land promised to Abram and his descendants.

“**Generation**” is the noun *dor* (רַבָּד) (dore), which denotes a “cycle of time, a life span,” which in the context of Genesis 15 is calculated to be one hundred years since Abram had his first child at one hundred years of age (Gen. 21:5).

Therefore, the “**fourth generation**” indicates that after four hundred years Abram’s descendants, i.e., the nation of Israel would come back into to the land of Canaan promised to Abram by the Lord.

Exodus 6:16-26 records that it was exactly in the fourth generation that the children of Israel left Egypt and returned to Canaan.

The Lord gives the reason for the delay in Abram’s descendants possessing the land of Canaan, namely, that the “**iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.**” The “**Amorite**” is a figure of speech called “synecdoche of the part” where a part is put for the whole, thus the term “**the Amorite**” is put for the ten nations listed in Genesis 15:19-21, of which “**the Amorite**” was a part of (cf. Gen. 48:22; Nm. 13:29; 21:21).

Discoveries at the ancient Ugarit, north of Tyre and Sidon, have revealed Canaanite religion promoted child sacrifice, idolatry, prostitution in the name of religion and all kinds of occultic and immoral practices. Therefore, it was an act of justice in the Lord dispossessing the Amorites, also known as the Canaanite.

The Lord does not dispossess and judge a nation immediately until He has given it grace in the

sense of giving it a sufficient amount of time to repent.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Once a nation has completely rejected God’s grace and every opportunity to repent and accept Christ as Savior, it will become totally and completely saturated with evil (see Lev. 18:24-28; 20:23) and then the Lord sends judgment.

Also, the Lord gave grace to the antediluvians and used Noah to preach the gospel to them for over a hundred years and once they rejected the gospel, the Lord sent the Flood (Gen. 6:5, 12; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5). The Lord also did not destroy Sodom and Gomorrah until He was satisfied Himself not even a quorum of righteous were left in those cities (Gen. 18-19). Therefore, Israel’s conquest of Canaan is based upon the Lord’s absolute justice and not on naked aggression.

Bob Deffinbaugh, “Here is an important principle, and one that governs the possession of the land of Canaan. God owns the land of Canaan (Leviticus 25:23), and He lets it out to those who will live according to righteousness. When Israel forgot their God and practiced the abominations of the Canaanites (cf. II Chronicles 28:3, 33:2), God put them out of the land also.” (Genesis, page 118).

Later on Israel’s history, the Lord justly permits her to be driven from the land of Canaan as well by Assyria, Babylon and Rome (Deut. 28:36-37; 2 Kgs. 24:14; 25:7). The judgment and dispossessing of these ten nations called the “Amorite” who are also called the “Canaanite” would be a fulfillment of Noah’s prophecy in Genesis 9:24-27.

We will complete our study of Genesis 15 by studying the Abrahamic covenant ceremony, which is recorded in Genesis 15:17-21.

Genesis 15:17, “It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces.”

The “**smoking oven**” speaks of Egypt and the tribulations through which Abram’s descendants would pass through.

Deuteronomy 4:20, “But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people for His own possession, as today.”

The “**flaming torch**” signifies God’s presence among His people in the midst of their adversities.

The smoke and the fire foreshadow the pillar of cloud and fire over the Tabernacle in Israel, which symbolized God’s presence at the Exodus (Ex. 19:18; 20:5; 24:17; 34:5-7; Deut. 4:11, 24, 33). Therefore, the flaming torch symbolizes the Lord’s presence and the fact that the torch alone passes through the pieces teaches Abram that this covenant that the Lord is making with him is “unconditional” meaning its fulfillment is totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness.

The fulfillment of this covenant was based entirely upon the death of Christ, which is portrayed in the sacrificed animals. The fact that the Lord made this covenant with Abram when it was very dark teaches that out of darkness and adversity will come blessing to Abram and his descendants, out of death, would come resurrection and the fulfillment of the covenant.

Genesis 15:18, “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.’”

“**Your descendants**” refers to the “regenerate” Israel or Jews racially who are saved who entered into this covenant that the Lord made with Abram by believing in Promised “Seed,” as their Savior namely, Jesus Christ.

Never in Israel’s history has she secured these boundaries and thus this promise awaits its fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ. According to Genesis 15:18, the boundaries of Israel during the millennial reign of Christ would be the river of Egypt on the south and the Euphrates River in Iraq in the north. The river of Egypt refers to most easterly branch of the Nile River that emptied into Lake Sironbis, not far from

Port Said. The promise for the Messiah is that He will rule from sea to sea and from the River Euphrates to the ends of the north (Zech. 9:10; Ps. 72:8).

Genesis 15:19, “the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite.”

The “**Kenites**” were a group of metalsmiths who traveled throughout the mineral-bearing region in the Wadi Arabah and descended from the Midianites and developed extraordinary skill in metalwork. They initially settled down early along the southwest shore of the Dead Sea, southeast of Hebron (Judg 1:16) but were nomadic as suggested in the Old Testament by numerous individual Kenites described as living in various places.

The “**Kenizzites**” dwelt somewhere in the southern part of Canaan and were related to the Kenites and like them were skilled metalworkers of the copper-rich Jordan Valley and the Arabah.

The name “**Kadmonite**” means, “easterner” and were the same as “the children of the east,” whose wisdom was celebrated (1 Kings 4:30). Qedhemah, “the East,” was a son of Ishmael (Gen 25:15; compare verse 6) and in an Egyptian story describing the adventures of a political refugee who fled from Egypt in the time of the 12th Dynasty, it is said that he found a refuge in Canaan in the land of Kaduma or Kedem.

Genesis 15:20, “and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim.”

The “**Hittites**” were present in the land of Canaan during the time of Abraham according to Genesis 15:19-21 and they reached the zenith of their power sometime later and still possessed great power at the time of Solomon a thousand years later according to 2 Chronicles 1:17.

The “Perizzites” refers to a tribe of people who inhabited the mountainous region eventually taken over by the tribes of Ephraim and Judah (cf. Josh. 11:3; 17:5; Judg. 1:4f.) and because they were related to the Canaanites, the term “Perizzites” often refers to this entire group (cf. Gen. 13:7; 34:30).

The “**Rephaim**” lived in Canaan and east of the Jordan (Gen. 15:20; Josh. 12:4; 13:12; 17:15) and

were of giant stature, such as the king of Bashan (Deut. 3:11, 13).

Genesis 15:21, “and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Girgashite and the Jebusite.”

The “**Amorite**” means literally “the Westerner,” and thus the name Amorites is generally supposed to mean “western highlanders” (cf. Num 13:29; Deut 1:7-20; Josh 10:6), or “tall ones” (cf. Amos 2:9; see also Num 13:33; Deut 2:10). The Amorites were so prominent that their name seems sometimes to be used for Canaanites in general (e.g., Josh 24:8). In Abraham’s day the Amorites lived west of the Dead Sea, in Hazazon-tamar (Gen 14:7), “**that is Engedi**” (2 Chron 20:2) and about Hebron (Gen 14:13, cf. 13:18).

The term “**Canaanite**” denotes those individuals descended from Canaan who lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua and whose western border was the Mediterranean Sea, especially in the lower and coastal regions (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51). The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem. The Canaanites who lived in the highland regions were often called “Amorite.”

At times the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called “**Canaanites**” but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called “Canaanite” (Nm. 13:29).

The “**Girgashite**” were descendents of Canaan according to 1 Chronicles 1:14 and according to Joshua 24:11, they lived west of the Jordan River.

The “**Jebusite**” settled in “Jebus,” which is the name of Jerusalem when this tribe held it (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 19:10) and it wasn’t until David’s reign that they were finally driven out (2 Sam. 5:6-7; cf. 1 Kings 9:20).

The ten nations listed in Genesis 15:19-21 are summarized by one name in Genesis 15:16, “**the Amorites**,” and are sometimes summarized by three (Ex. 23:28) or by six (Ex. 3:17) or by seven (Josh. 24:11; Acts 13:19).

Ten nations are listed in Genesis 15:19-21 since ten is the number of completeness and indicates that the entire tract of land promised by the Lord to Abram and his regenerate descendants would be permanently possessed by them during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 16

Genesis 16:1-6 records that against the will of the Lord, Abram agreed to his wife, Sarai's scheme to have him sleep with her Egyptian maid, Hagar in order to have a child since Sarai was barren and now in menopause. This bad decision by Abram and Sarai produced conflict in their home.

This bad decision also had historical repercussions since it resulted in the present day Arab/Israeli conflict since Ishmael, the son that Abram fathered with Hagar, was the father of the Arabs and Isaac who Abram fathered later on with Sarai, is the father of the Jews.

Genesis 15:4 records the Lord guaranteeing Abraham that he will father a son and which guarantee Abraham undoubtedly related to his wife Sarah.

Genesis 15:1-5

"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.'"

"Abram said, 'O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?'"

"And Abram said, 'Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.'"

"Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 'This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.'"

"And He took him outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.'"

But in Genesis 16, we see both Abraham and Sarah operating in unbelief and attempting to

solve their problem of being childless by using Sarah's personal servant Hagar as a surrogate. This attempt to take matters into their own hands failed miserably and produced conflict in their home and in the world to come.

Abraham and Sarah's failure teaches us that failure to wait on the Lord and trust Him to deliver on His promises and attempting to solve our problems independently of the Word of God will cause misery and heartache!

In Genesis 16, we see that from the human perspective, the Lord appears to be delaying in fulfilling this promise of a child with Sarai, but this is done to test the faith of Abram and Sarai.

Jeremiah 20:12, "Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart."

The fact that Abram and Sarai still had not a child caused great tension and conflict in the home of Abram and Sarai resulting in them attempting to engineer their own fulfillment of the promise of a child that the Lord made to Abram in Genesis 15.

On several different occasions prior to the failure of Abram and Sarai in Genesis 16, the Lord promised Abram descendants, thus obviously implying that the Lord would give Abram and Sarai a child (Gen. 12:2, 7; 13:14-16). In fact, in the previous chapter, Genesis 15, the Lord flat out stated that Abram would not have to adopt an heir but would father an heir himself.

Eventually, we will see that the Lord will demonstrate His omnipotence by waiting until it was humanly impossible for Abram and Sarai to have a child before He would miraculously fulfill His Word.

Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Romans 4:17, "(as it is written, 'A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU') in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist."

In the meantime, Abram and Sarai, aware that they were advanced in age, entered into panic and attempt to help the Lord in fulfilling His promise to them of a child.

Genesis 16:1

“Now Sarai, Abram's wife had borne him no children, and she had an Egyptian maid whose name was Hagar.”

Gordon J. Wenham makes the following comment in the “Word Biblical Commentary” series, entitled “Genesis 15—50”; Waco: Word Books, 1994: “It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world, for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman: to have a great brood of children was the mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure. So throughout the ancient East polygamy was resorted to as a means of obviating childlessness. But wealthier wives preferred the practice of surrogate motherhood, whereby they allowed their husbands to ‘go in to’ . . . their maids, a euphemism for sexual intercourse (cf. 6:4; 30:3; 38:8, 9; 39:14). The mistress could then feel that her maid's child was her own and exert some control over it in a way that she could not if her husband simply took a second wife.”

“**Hagar**” was acquired by Abram and Sarai from Pharaoh while they were in Egypt (Gen. 12:15-16).

“**Maid**” is the noun *shipchah* (hj* ρ +v!) (ship-kah), which refers to the fact that Hagar was a personal servant and property of Sarai and was accountable to Sarai and not Abram and this relationship is confirmed by Genesis 16:8-9 where the Lord tells Hagar after she ran away from Sarai to submit to Sarai's authority.

Genesis 16:2

“So Sarai said to Abram, ‘Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.’ And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai.”

Now, according to a comparison of Genesis 16:16, at this particular time in the Genesis narrative, Abram was eighty-five years old and a comparison of Genesis 17:17 reveals that Sarai was ten years younger than Abram, therefore, in Genesis 16:16 she was seventy-five years old.

It is reasonable to suppose that Sarai was already in menopause since Genesis 18:11 states that when

she was ninety years old that she was well past the age of childbearing. Therefore her proposal to Abram helps explain her complaint that the Lord has prevented her from bearing children.

Sarai draws the conclusion that because she has entered into menopause that the child that the Lord promised Abram as recorded in Genesis 15 will not come from her body but another. It appears that her faith in the Lord has weakened and so she seeks a solution independently of the Lord.

The people in Abram's culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife so in effect Hagar became Abram's concubine. Not only was using a concubine an option, but in Hurrian culture husbands sometimes required that if their wife could not bear children she had to provide a concubine for him. This custom helps explain why Abram was willing to be a part of Sarai's plan that seems so unusual to us and though using a woman other than one's wife was a custom of the day it was never God's desire (2:24; Matt. 19:4-5).

Sarai's command “**go in to my maid**” refers to the fact that Sarai was demanding immediate action from Abram and was “wearing the pants” in the marriage and was out of the will of God since the wife's responsibility is to be obedient to her husband (Eph. 5:22-25; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

The statement “**Abram listened to the voice of Sarai**” reveals that Abram had failed not only spiritually by operating in unbelief but also failed in his authority in the marriage as Sarai's husband.

His response should have been no and he should have explained to Sarai that the Lord had promised them that they would have a child together.

Abram who is the father of all those who believe (Rm. 4:11) fails to operate in faith meaning he failed to trust the Lord to give him and Sarai a child. Abram and Sarai are motivated by fear at this particular time, they fear that they will never have a child and so they take things into their own hands rather than trust in the Lord, and this lack of faith, had negative consequences.

Notice that Abram and Sarai are never said to consult the Lord in prayer because they have decided to take things into their own hands.

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them. The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Abram and Sarai are looking at the fact that they are childless and thus enter into fear rather than concentrating on the Lord's promise that He would give them a child. Abram and Sarai have become impatient with the Lord and as a result have grown tired of waiting for the Lord to deliver on His promise of giving them a child.

Isaiah 40:31, "Yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; They will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary."

Genesis 16:3, "After Abram had lived ten years in the land of Canaan, Abram's wife Sarai took Hagar the Egyptian, her maid, and gave her to her husband Abram as his wife."

Sarai in faith trusting the Lord alone to give her a child is a picture of grace procuring salvation through faith alone in Christ alone, totally apart from the works of the Law (Eph. 2:8-9). On the other hand, Hagar is a type of the Law, which offers the Lord some human resource or merit for acceptance with Him in place of complete dependence upon His power and unmerited blessings both to save and to keep the promised Seed (Gal. 4:21-31).

Genesis 16:4, "He went in to Hagar, and she conceived; and when she (Hagar) saw that she had conceived, her mistress (Sarai) was despised in her (Hagar's) sight."

The statement "**He (Abram) went in to Hagar and she (Hagar) conceived**" refers to the fact that Abram and Hagar had sexual intercourse and as a result Hagar got pregnant.

The statement "**when she (Hagar) saw that she had conceived, her mistress (Sarai) was despised in her (Hagar's) sight**" indicates that Hagar became proud and looked down upon Sarai because she and not Sarai was able to give Abram a son, which was like rubbing salt in the wounds

of Sarai who was already suffering because of being childless.

Undoubtedly, Hagar was basking in the affection of Abram when Hagar gave birth to Ishmael and this drove Sarai to jealousy.

Genesis 16:5, "And Sarai said to Abram, 'May the wrong done me be upon you. I gave my maid into your arms, but when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her sight. May the LORD judge between you and me.'"

Abram has reaped what he sowed meaning he disobeyed the Spirit and obeyed his sin nature by not trusting in the promise of the Lord to give him a child through Sarai.

Galatians 6:7, 8

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Abram has sowed the wind but reaped the whirlwind in the form of Sarai's contentiousness or in other words, her bitching for lack of a better word.

Hosea 8:7, "For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind."

Sarai has become a contentious woman, which the Word of God prohibits Christian woman from becoming.

Proverbs 19:13, "And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping."

Proverbs 27:15, 16

"A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike."

"He who would restrain her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand."

Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman."

Proverbs 21:19, "It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman."

Proverbs 25:24, “It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

Like Eve, Sarai has not taken responsibility for her actions and has blamed someone else for the results of her act, namely, Abram. Sarai found that her scheme had backfired.

A child was born, but while loved by Abram (17:18,20; 21:11), Sarai despised him (21:10).

The birth of Ishmael had driven a wedge between Abram and Sarai, rather than drawing them together. Abram had given Sarai what she had wanted, but now she insisted that he had failed her in doing so as indicated by her statements to Abram in Genesis 16:5.

While Sarai was angry with Abram, she must have known that it was she who had made Hagar’s bed but we do not read of confession of sin on Sarai’s lips, but only bitterness.

Abram did not learn his lesson either as demonstrated by his failing to function as the authority in the marriage and defers to Sarai in choosing what to do with Hagar. He was the accomplice to sin by refusing to resist it or to rebuke Sarai.

Sarai’s stinging rebuke served only to cause Abram to retreat further. He did not acknowledge his sin either, nor did he confront Sarai with hers but instead he persisted in allowing Sarai to have her own way.

Genesis 16:6, “**But Abram said to Sarai, ‘Behold, your maid is in your power; do to her what is good in your sight.’ So Sarai treated her harshly, and she fled from her presence.**”

Abram had gone along with Sarai’s plan to produce an heir and now he gave Sarai free reign in dealing with Hagar.

Sarai seems to have been within the boundaries of legality, while obviously not functioning according to the love of God.

Hagar, tired of facing Sarai’s tyranny, fled, heading back toward the land of Egypt.

Genesis 16:7-8 records Hagar’s encounter with the preincarnate Christ.

Genesis 16:7, “**Now the angel of the LORD found her (Hagar) by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur.**”

Genesis 16:7 records the first reference in the Old Testament to the “**Angel of the Lord.**”

“**The angel of the Lord**” is the “preincarnate” Christ and therefore a “theophany,” or “Christophany,” which are technical theological terms used to refer to a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

The three-fold division of the Lord Jesus Christ’s career: (1) Pre-incarnate: Eternity past as the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Son of God. (2) Incarnate: Virgin birth through the 1st Advent to the resurrection. (3) Glorified Incarnate: Resurrection and on into eternity future.

Genesis 16 records a visible and auditory appearance of the “preincarnate” Christ, which is confirmed by the context as we will note as we go further along in the chapter.

“**Angel**” is the noun *mal’akh* (Ea*l+m^)(mal-awk), which means, “messenger” is used in the Old Testament with reference to “elect” angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the “preincarnate” Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1).

The context indicates that *mal’akh* in Genesis 16:7 is a theophany, a visible and auditory appearance of the preincarnate Christ.

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men. In Genesis 16:7, we see the Lord involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Hagar.

The sexual union of Abram and Hagar was not according to the will of God but the Lord permitted it to take place, and though this union was out of the will of God, the Lord would make a gracious promise to Hagar and her descendants.

The name “**Shur**” means “wall” and was a city on the borders of Egypt and Palestine and a

comparison of Genesis 20:1, 25:18, 1 Samuel 15:7 and 27:8 indicates that it clearly lies near the northern border of Egypt in the Sinai peninsula in the modern Suez region.

In Roman times, the city was named "Pelusium" but was known by the Hebrews as "Sin." The whole desert extending from the southern borders of Palestine to the edges of the Egyptian northern border was called the "**wilderness of Shur**" (Ex. 15:22). Therefore, it appears that Hagar who was an Egyptian was attempting to make her way back to Egypt.

The "**wilderness**" portrays the spiritually dry cosmic system of Satan and the "**spring of water in the wilderness**" portrays the Holy Spirit, who is given to those who thirst spiritually and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. The unbeliever resides in the spiritually dry cosmic system of Satan and is thus spiritually dead meaning he has no relationship with God nor does he have the capacity to have one.

Ephesians 2:1, 2

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins."

"in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience."

But the one who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior receives the Holy Spirit who is described by the Lord Jesus Christ as "**living water**" in John 4:13-14 and 7:38-39.

During our Lord's 1st Advent, He spoke with a Samaritan woman at a well and spoke of Himself as "**Living water**."

John 4:13, 14

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again.'"

"but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

John 7:38, 39

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'"

"But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

The apostle Paul also employed the metaphor of the Holy Spirit being living water and the believer drinking of Him when they believed in Christ as their Savior.

1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

Therefore, in Genesis 16:7, the fact that the preincarnate Christ found Hagar an unbeliever by a spring of water on the way to Shur portrays the Lord seeking out the unbeliever and giving him the gift of the Spirit when they believe in Him as their Savior.

Also, like the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, Hagar believes in Christ as her Savior after her conversation with the Lord in which He prophesies of her child and promises that her descendants would be innumerable. The fact that the preincarnate Christ revealed Himself to Hagar by a spring of water in the wilderness in a time of adversity teaches us that the human soul encounters the Lord Jesus Christ not while enjoying the pleasures of this world but during times of adversity and despair.

The Lord demonstrates His unique divine love for Hagar in that He initiates a relationship between Himself and Hagar seeking her out first rather than Hagar seeking out the Lord.

1 John 4:10, "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

1 John 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us."

Genesis 16:8, "He said, 'Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from and where are you going?' And she said, 'I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai.'"

Notice that the Lord addresses Hagar as “**Sarai’s maid**” thus indicating that the Lord did not approve or acknowledge the union between Hagar and Abram and that the Lord consider her to still be under the authority of Sarai.

Hagar is out of the geographical will of God for her life meaning that the place where God wanted her to be was with Abram and Sarai. Just as Lot was in danger and without protection because he was out of the geographical will of God in Genesis 13 and 14, so Hagar in Genesis 16 is in danger and without protection because she is out of the geographical will of God.

H.C. Leupold commenting on this passage, writes, “No man should rashly abandon his place in life unless he has a distinct indication from the Lord to do so” (Exposition of Genesis volume 1, page 502).

Genesis 16:7-8 reveals that the Lord hears and sees distress and affliction in the human race and cares for each member of the human race.

Psalm 34:18, “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”

Hagar is crushed and brokenhearted and yet the Lord saves her. The Lord reaches out to Hagar who has been unjustly treated by Sarai and Abram, thus revealing the Lord hates injustice.

Deuteronomy 32:4, “The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, righteous and upright is He.”

The Lord knew that Hagar ran away from Sarai since He is omniscient meaning He knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history.

The Lord did not ask these two questions of Hagar to solicit information regarding her situation but rather because He wanted to arouse in her an awareness that her flight has not altered her position or her duty, nor has her state of pregnancy caused any alteration or solved her problems but in fact created more problems for her.

Her flight has not changed a thing, she is still pregnant and not fulfilling her duty to Sarai. Running away does not change relationships, nor does it remove responsibility. Jonah, even in the belly of that fish, was still God’s prophet with a message for the Ninevites. Hagar continued to be Sarai’s maid, and it remained her duty to serve her mistress.

Hagar is undoubtedly emotional at this point in the narrative and by asking these two questions, the Lord is attempting to bring her back to reality and also it shows that He cares.

The Lord asks Hagar two questions: (1) “**Where have you come from?**” (2) “**Where are you going?**”

Hagar answers the first question but does not answer the second because she wasn’t sure where she was going or if she should be leaving Abram and Sarai’s protection in the first place.

Even though she was heading in the direction of Egypt from where she was born, her conscience and the Holy Spirit were convicting her to go back to Abram and Sarai and fulfill her duty.

Also, she was not sure if she should be leaving Abram and Sarai in the first place because she was a pregnant woman alone in the desert without food and water. Therefore, her failure to answer the second question indicates that not only was she not sure where she was going but she was having reservations as to if she should be going at all.

Genesis 16:9-12 records the Lord’s gracious promises to Hagar.

Genesis 16:9, “**Then the angel of the LORD said to her, ‘Return to your mistress, and submit yourself to her authority.’**”

The fact that “**the angel of the Lord**” is not an angel but rather the preincarnate Christ is confirmed in Genesis 16:9 since no angel but only the Lord Jesus Christ who is sovereign has the authority to command Hagar to go back to Sarai.

In response to Hagar’s answer to His first question, the preincarnate Christ commands Hagar to return and submit to the authority of Sarai.

Notice the Lord commands Hagar to go back to Sarai and perform her duties as a personal servant

and property of Hagar and does “not” tell her to seek her freedom and to not fear Sarai since the Lord will deal with Sarai Himself.

Authority has been designed by the Lord to protect the human race whether it is the husband over the wife or the parents over the children or the government over its citizens or the employer over his employee.

The Lord is commanding Hagar to submit to her employer and master in order that she might receive protection from harm.

Ephesians 6:5, 6

“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.”

“not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

Colossians 3:22-24

“Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

“knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

1 Timothy 6:1, 2

“All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against.”

“Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.”

1 Peter 2:18-20

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.”

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”

The apostle Paul taught the slaves in the churches to not worry about their lack of freedom in natural realm but rather they must be aware that they are in reality slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ. If they can't achieve freedom in the natural realm that is fine, their lack of freedom will not hinder them from executing the Father's will.

1 Corinthians 7:20-23

“Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.”

“Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.”

“For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.”

“You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.”

Genesis 16:10, “Moreover, the angel of the LORD said to her, ‘I will greatly multiply your descendants so that they will be too many to count.’”

The fact that “**the angel of the Lord**” is not an angel but rather the preincarnate Christ is confirmed in Genesis 16:10 since only the Lord Jesus Christ who is omnipotent has the power to multiply Hagar's descendants so that they are innumerable.

In response to Hagar's answer to His first question, the preincarnate Christ promises Hagar that He will multiply her descendants so that they are innumerable, which would give her encouragement and comfort in her distress.

2 Corinthians 1:3, 4

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort."

"who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God."

"I will greatly multiply": (1) Hiphil (causative) infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *ravah*, "multiplying." (2) 1st person common (neither masculine nor feminine) singular hiphil (causative) imperfect form of the verb *ravah*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in Genesis 16:10 in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea. So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, "multiplying, I will multiply" but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, "I will greatly multiply." Thus indicating that the Lord is promising Hagar that her descendants would greatly multiply so that they would be innumerable.

Genesis 16:11, "The angel of the LORD said to her further, 'Behold, you are with child, and you will bear a son; And you shall call his name Ishmael, because the LORD has given heed to your affliction.'"

The fact that **"the angel of the Lord"** is not an angel but rather the preincarnate Christ is confirmed in Genesis 16:11 since no angel but only the Lord Jesus Christ is omniscient could know every detail concerning the child who was in her womb and his descendants.

Psalm 139:13-16

"For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb."

"I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well."

"My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth."

"Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written the days

that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

The name **"Ishmael"** means, "God hears" and alludes to the fact that God heard or took notice of Hagar's suffering.

The Lord informs Hagar that she will name her son "God hears" (Ishmael) since by her son's name, she would always be reminded as to how the God of Abram had met her needs and delivered her and not the gods of Egypt, to which she attempted to return to.

"Ishmael" became the progenitor of the Arabs, who have traditionally been the enemies of Israel and also from the line of **"Ishmael"** came Muhammad and Islam, one of the most demonic of religions and a foe of not only Israel but also Christianity.

In Genesis 16:12, the Lord describes the character of her son and his descendants and that he unlike Hagar, he would roam free.

Genesis 16:12, "He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers."

According to Genesis 25:12-18, **"Ishmael"** and his descendants settled in the region from Havilah to Shur in the Arabian Desert and were hostile to their neighbors.

Genesis 25:12-18

"Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham."

"and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, 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 camps; twelve princes according to their tribes."

“These are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.”

“They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives.”

Even though “**Ishmael**” was Abram’s firstborn son, he was not the son through whom the covenant that the Lord made with Abram would be fulfilled. Fulfillment would come through Isaac as recorded in Genesis 15.

“**Ishmael**” was promised however, that he would become a great nation (Gen.21).

Genesis 16:12, “He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.”

The Lord prophesied that Ishmael would wander the deserts like a wild donkey and would be a man who loved the freedom of roaming the desert, but would be constantly in conflict with others. It is implied that he would also be a man of courage but would be an aggressor full of hostility.

Henry M. Morris commenting on Genesis 16:12, writes, “The long history of the Arab peoples, who are descended from Ishmael, is an obvious commentary on the fulfillment of this ancient prophecy, seen most vividly at present in the current Israeli-Arab hostilities” (The Genesis Record, page 331).

The sentence “**And he will live to the east of all his brothers**” is incorrectly translated because of confusion in translating the preposition *panim* and should be translated “he will live in opposition to all his brothers.”

“**To the east**”: (1) Preposition ‘*al* (lu^), which is used to express opposition and means, “against” (2) Preposition *panim* (syn!P*) (paw-neem), which means, “in the face of.”

This prophecy indicates that Ishmael and his descendants, who are the Arabs would live in opposition to their blood relatives and in particular the Jews who are related to the Arabs since they share the same father, Abram.

H.C. Leupold commenting on Genesis 16:12, writes, “Apparently, the fellow himself as well as his descendants will not be of a peaceable disposition. We should say, he will carry a chip on his shoulder and have his finger on the trigger” (Exposition of Genesis 1, page 505).

Genesis 16:13-16 records Hagar’s response to the Lord’s gracious, promises.

Genesis 16:13, “Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, ‘You are a God who sees’; for she said, ‘Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?’”

The fact that the “**angel of the Lord**” is not an angel but rather an appearance of the preincarnate Christ is confirmed in that Hagar states that she has seen God who is omniscient.

As we noted on Tuesday, this appearance of the preincarnate Christ in Genesis 16 is a “theophany” or “Christophany.”

The statement “**You are a God who sees**” refers to the omniscience of the Lord meaning that the Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angel history.

Proverbs 5:21, “For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.”

Proverbs 15:3, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.”

Hagar recognizes the Lord as the One who sees her indicating that she is now a believer like Abram and Sarai. In human relations to be known personally by a high placed person can be a great advantage. How much more important is it to be known by God.

Psalms 139:1-6

“O LORD, You have searched me and known me.”

“You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar.”

“You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways.”

“Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O LORD, You know it all.”

“You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me.”

“Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.”

There is a great difference between acknowledging that God is omniscient and the recognition that there is a personal relationship between God and you. Hagar’s recognition that she has a personal relationship with the Lord indicates that she has accepted Christ as Her Savior and is a believer.

The apostle Paul wrote in

1 Corinthians 8:3, “But the man who loves God is known by God.”

Hagar’s recognition is more than the acquisition of a certain knowledge about God because the Lord has touched her heart and this changed her. Hagar has accepted by faith the Lord’s revelation of Himself.

1 John 4:16, “We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.”

The Lord revealed Himself to Hagar in order that she might love the Lord. The teaching of the Word of God is designed to reveal who and what God is and what He has done for us and is a means to an end and not an end in itself.

Bible instruction is a means to an end and that end is to love God and to love others with God’s love. Paul taught this principle to Timothy.

1 Timothy 1:5, “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

So we see that love for the Lord has started to grow in her heart and even towards Sarai who she now shares a relationship with the Lord. She loves the Lord and now even Sarai because the Lord first loved her.

1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first loved us.”

This means that in spite of Sarah’s unreasonable and probably cruel attitude towards her, she can

now submit, because she knows her and Sarai have something in common, namely, a relationship with the Lord. Nowhere do we see in the rest of the Bible that Hagar is bitter towards Sarai.

Now in Genesis 16:11 we have the Lord naming Hagar’s son “God hears” and in Genesis 16:13 we have Hagar giving a name to the Lord, “God sees.” These two names form not only the climax to this section in Genesis but also the entire point, namely that God hears and God sees.

Hagar has received a direct revelation from the Lord about His character and nature. She has received revelation from the Lord that He is compassionate as illustrated by the Lord naming Hagar’s son, “**Ishmael**,” which means, “God hears.”

God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17).

1 John 3:16-18

“We know love by this that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

“But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?”

“Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Hagar has also received revelation that the Lord is omniscient as illustrated by Hagar naming the Lord, “**the One who sees**.” The Lord spoke in direct revelation and Hagar responded by placing her faith in the Lord. Then, we see Hagar giving an explanation for naming God as the One who sees, namely, she has looked at and accepted the revelation of the One who sees.

In Genesis 16:13 in the New American Standard updated version, we see a rhetorical question attributed to Hagar, namely, “**Have I even remained alive here after seeing Him?**” but this translation is incorrect for the following reasons.

“**Have...even**” is “not” an interrogative particle introducing a question but rather it is the adverb *gam* (SG^), which is an “emphatic” particle

emphasizing Hagar's statement, which follows and should be translated, "indeed."

"**Here**" is the adverb *halom*, which indicates the location in which Hagar looked at the preincarnate Christ indicated in Genesis 16:7 as by "**a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring of on the way to Shur.**"

"**I remained alive**" is the verb *ra'ah* (חָרָא), which in the 1st person common (neither masculine or feminine) singular qal perfect form means, "I have looked and accepted the revelation of" and not "I remained alive" since never in the Old Testament does the verb mean, "to live."

In the context of Genesis 16:13, the verb *ra'ah* not only means, "to look at" (the preincarnate Christ) but also "to accept (by faith) the revelation of Himself and His message to her."

"**After**" is the substantive *achar* (אַחַר) (akh-ar), which is used as a preposition to denote the direction in which Hagar was looking or seeing, namely, in the direction of the Lord.

Therefore, together, the qal perfect form of the verb *ra'ah* and the preposition *achar* means, "**I have looked at.**"

"**Seeing Him**" is incorrectly translated since in the original Hebrew text we have the masculine singular qal active participle form of the verb *ra'ah*, which in the participle form functions as a substantive meaning, "the One who sees."

It also serves as the direct object of the qal perfect form of the verb *ra'ah* that appears early in the passage meaning that participle form of the verb *ra'ah* receives the action of the qal perfect form of the same verb.

Therefore, Genesis 16:13 should be translated as follows: "**Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Indeed, here in this place, I have looked at and accepted the revelation and message of the One who sees.'**"

The New International Version comes closest in accurately translating this passage.

Genesis 16:13, "for she said, 'I have now seen the One who sees me.'" NIV

Genesis 16:14, "Therefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered."

"**Beer**" refers to a well dug close to the spring (Hebrew *ayin*, "spring") for convenience and "**Lahai-roi**" means, "belonging to the living one, my seeing one."

"**Kadesh**" means, "holy", and was an oasis about seventy miles southwest of the Dead Sea and is also called "Kadesh-Barnea" and was located west of Israel's western boundary, the River of Egypt or the Wadi el-Arish, in the southwest Negev.

"**Bered**" was a town in the south of Palestine, near the well Lahai-roi (Beer-lahai-roi), twelve miles from Beersheba.

Genesis 16:15, "So Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram called the name of his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael."

Genesis 16:16, "Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to him."

After Hagar's encounter with the preincarnate Christ, she returned to Hebron, to Abram and Sarai and undoubtedly told them both about her experience with the Lord. No doubt, all three resolved to live together as amicably as possible and with the help of the Lord. When the child was born, Abram in obedience to the revelation received by Hagar from the Lord, named their son, Ishmael.

Reflections

The apostle Paul in Galatians 4 presents the spiritual and allegorical meaning of the relationship between Hagar and Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac.

In Galatians 4, Paul wrote that the relationship between Sarah and Hagar, and Ishmael and Isaac contains (not is) an allegory (Gal. 4:24).

An "allegory" is a series of metaphors in which each one adds an element to form a composite picture of the message, e.g., in the good shepherd allegory (John 10) each part carries meaning. An "allegory" compares two distinct entities and involves a story or extended development of figurative expressions. Therefore, in Galatians 4, the apostle Paul speaks "figuratively" of the

relationship between Abraham and his sons, Ishmael, Isaac, and his wives, Hagar and Sarah.

Paul teaches that Hagar represents the Mosaic Law, and Ishmael is its fruit (slaves) whereas Sarai is a picture of God's grace, and Isaac is its fruit (free sons). Paul draws a correspondence based upon an urgent need to address a pressing issue in Galatia since the Galatians were submitting to the legalistic teaching of the Judaizers.

The "Judaizers" were composed of both regenerate and unregenerate Jews and taught strict adherence to the 613 mandates found in the Mosaic Law as well as the oral traditions of the Rabbis, which are now, documented in the Mishna and the Talmud as well.

The Judaizers taught that one had to observe and practice the Mosaic Law in order to get saved whereas Paul taught that salvation by grace through faith in Christ and not through the works of the Mosaic Law (Eph. 2:8-9; Gal. 2:16).

Galatians 2:16, "nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified."

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

The Judaizers were attractive people but were "legalistic" in the sense that they taught and lived according to a strict adherence to the letter of the Law rather than the spirit of the Law (Mk. 2-3)! This is illustrated by the Pharisees attitude towards the Lord when He healed on the Sabbath.

Under the Mosaic Law, the Sabbath was designed to benefit Israel by prohibiting Israel from working on this day and yet the Pharisees criticized the Lord for healing on the Sabbath, thus they strictly adhered to letter of the Law rather than the spirit of the Law.

The old sin nature loves legalism because legalism gives the old sin nature a chance to look good.

Paul teaches the Galatians that prior to salvation they were under bondage to the Law but that through faith alone in Christ alone who redeemed them from the curse of the Law, they have been set free from the Law. Therefore, the apostle Paul teaches that in an allegorical sense Hagar who was a slave girl is a picture of the believer prior to salvation under bondage to the Law whereas Sarah is a picture of the believer after salvation free from the Law.

Galatians 3:1-29

"You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?"

"This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

"Did you suffer so many things in vain -- if indeed it was in vain?"

"So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

"Even so Abraham BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS."

"Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham."

"The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.'"

"So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer."

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.'"

"Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, 'THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.'"

“However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.’”

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.’”

“in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

“Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.”

“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

“What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.”

“For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.”

“Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.”

“Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one.”

“Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.”

“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.”

“Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.”

“But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

“And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise.”

Galatians 4:1-26

“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything.”

“but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father.”

“So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.”

“But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law.”

“so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

“Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”

“However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those which by nature are no gods.”

“But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless

elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again?"

"You observe days and months and seasons and years."

"I fear for you, that perhaps I have labored over you in vain."

"I beg of you, brethren, become as I am, for I also have become as you are. You have done me no wrong."

"but you know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time."

"and that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you did not despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself."

"Where then is that sense of blessing you had? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me."

"So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth?"

"They eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to shut you out so that you will seek them."

"But it is good always to be eagerly sought in a commendable manner, and not only when I am present with you."

"My children, with whom I am again in labor until Christ is formed in you."

"but I could wish to be present with you now and to change my tone, for I am perplexed about you."

"Tell me, you who want to be under law, do you not listen to the law?"

"For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman."

"But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise."

"This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from

Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar."

"Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children."

"But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother."

In Galatians 4, Paul does not say the Moses understood Hagar as Mount Sinai or as Jerusalem or that Abraham and Isaac were figures representing something greater; rather, he was drawing a correspondence based upon an urgent need to address a pressing issue in Galatia.

Galatians 4:27-29

"For it is written, 'REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.'"

"And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise."

"But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also."

Paul states in Galatians 4:23-29 that Abraham's two sons, Ishmael and Isaac illustrate our two births: (1) Physical birth that makes us sinners with an old Adamic sin nature (2) Spiritual birth that makes us children of God with the nature of Christ.

Isaac illustrates the believer in that he was born according to the power of God since Galatians 4:29 says that Isaac was born "**according to the Spirit**" whereas Ishmael illustrates the unbeliever in that he was born "**according to the flesh.**"

The fact that Ishmael, who was born according to the flesh, persecuted Isaac who was born according to the Spirit illustrates the problems that our old sin nature, which we received at physical birth, causes for our new nature, which we received at the spiritual birth.

Just as Ishmael was a "**wild donkey of a man**" and a slave that nobody could control, not even his mother so the indwelling old Adamic sin nature is

at war with God and others and the Law cannot change or control it.

Galatians 4:30, 31

“But what does the Scripture say? ‘CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.’”

“So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.”

Five times in Galatians 4:22-31, Paul called Hagar the “**bondwoman**” whereas Sarah was a freewoman. Therefore, Sarah’s position illustrates the freedom of being under grace and Hagar’s position as a slave illustrates being under bondage to the Law.

The Law was meant to be tutor to lead us to Christ and not to be our mother. The Judaizers were trying to make Hagar a mother again, while Paul was in spiritual travail for his converts that they might become more like Christ.

Whoever chooses Hagar (the Law) as his mother is going to experience bondage (Gal. 4:8-11, 22-25, 30-31; 5:1) but whoever chooses Sarah (grace) as his mother is going to experience liberty in Christ (see Gal. 5:1).

Hagar was cast out according to Genesis 21:9-10 and God subsequently approved of it according to Genesis 21:12 illustrating that the Law and grace are not compatible and at odds with each other (see Romans 11:6).

The Judaizers in Paul’s day were trying to reconcile Hagar with Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac and such reconciliation is contrary to the Word of God since it is impossible to mix the Law and grace, faith and works, God’s gift of righteousness and man’s attempts to earn divine righteousness on his own merit.

Warren Wiersbe writes, “From the human perspective it might seem cruel that God should command Abraham to send away his own son Ishmael, whom he loved very much. But it was the only solution to the problem, for the ‘**wild man**’ could never live with the child of promise. In a deeper sense, however, think of what it cost God when He gave His Son to bear the curse of the Law to set us free. Abraham’s broken heart meant

Isaac’s liberty; God’s giving of His Son means our liberty in Christ” (The Bible Exposition Commentary, volume 1, page 711, Victor Books).

The Galatians were trying to effect a compromise by attempting to live the Christian way of life by practicing the Law along with their faith in Christ.

Just as there was no compromise in Abraham’s home between his two sons so there can be no compromise between keeping the Law and living under grace. Just as Ishmael had to go once Isaac was born so the Law had to go once Christ had come.

Genesis 17

Genesis 17:1-8 records Abram receiving another direct revelation from the Lord in the form of a theophany or an appearance of the preincarnate Christ. The Lord promises Abram that he will be the progenitor of numerous nations and kings.

Genesis 17:1, “Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.’”

Genesis 17:1 records that Abram was ninety-nine years old when the Lord appeared to him once again. Whereas Genesis 16:16 records that Abram was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born. Thus thirteen years have elapsed from the time of Ishmael’s birth to this appearance by the Lord to Abram.

These thirteen years were passed over in silence in the Word of God. It would be easy for Abram to forget the Lord’s promise that he and Sarai would have a child together. Therefore, the Lord reiterates and enlarges upon the previous promises made to Abram as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-17 and 15:1-6.

According to Genesis 17:16-17, it appears that Abram believed that Ishmael was the son of the promise and had given up hope that he and Sarai would have a child.

Abram could not fathom he and his wife Sarai having a child together since they were both advanced in age, Sarai was an eighty-nine year old woman and he was ninety-nine years old.

The fact that Genesis 17:1 records that Abram was ninety-nine years old when the Lord appeared to him again indicates that Sarai was eighty-nine years old since a comparison of Genesis 16:16 with 17:17 reveals that Sarai was ten years younger than Abram. Therefore, Sarai was well into menopause and Abram was now impotent sexually.

These circumstances were surely an extreme test of their faith since the Lord promised that the two would have a child together. Yet, in Romans 4, the apostle Paul writes that Abram's faith grew rather than weakened.

Romans 4:19-21

"Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb."

"yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God."

"and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform."

The Lord delays in fulfilling the promise to Abram and Sarai of a child in order to demonstrate His omnipotence by waiting until it was humanly impossible for them to have a child before He would miraculously fulfill His Word.

Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Arthur Pink, "God has reasons for delays. Not until man comes to the end of himself will God put forth His power. Not until man's extremity is reached does God's opportunity arrive. Not until our own powers are 'dead' will God act in grace." (Gleanings in Genesis, page 183).

Arthur Pink, "God has more than one reason for His delays. Often it is to test the faith of His children, to develop their patience, to bring them to the end of themselves. His delays are in order that when He does act His delivering power may be more plainly evident, that what He does may be more deeply appreciated and that in consequence He may be more illustriously glorified." (Gleanings in Genesis, page 184).

The preincarnate Christ identifies Himself to Abram here at this point in the narrative as *El Shaddai*, "**God Almighty**" in order to emphasize His omnipotence.

The title *El Shaddai* describes the Lord as being able to make the barren fertile so that He might fulfill His promises to give Abram and Sarai a child in their old age.

Robert Baker Girdlestone commenting on *Shaddai*, writes, "The title *Shaddai* really indicates the fulness and riches of God's grace, and would remind the Hebrew reader that from God comes every good and perfect gift-that He is never weary of pouring forth His mercies on His people, and that He is more ready to give than they are to receive." (Girdlestone's Synonyms of the Old Testament, page 45).

Therefore in Genesis 17:1, the fact that the Lord identifies Himself by the use of this proper noun *Shaddai* expresses His desire and ability to give to Abram a child and to make him the progenitor of numerous nations and kings.

The Lord's command to Abram to "**walk before Me**" expresses the Lord's desire to have intimate fellowship with Abram. Fellowship with the Lord would involve Abram confessing his sins to be restored to fellowship and obedience to the Word of the Lord in order to maintain that fellowship (1 John 1:5-2:6).

Abraham's obedience to the Word of the Lord constitutes walking by means of faith meaning taking the Lord at His Word to deliver on His promise to give him and Sarai a child and rest in the Lord's promise.

The Lord's command to Abram to "**be blameless**" does "not" mean that Abram was to be sinless since he still had a sin nature, which he would not be rid of until his physical death. But rather it means that Abram was to have "integrity of character" as a result of fulfilling his obligations to love both God and men.

The commands to "**walk before Me**" and "**be blameless**" express the Lord's desire for Abram to walk according to the standards of His holiness by means of obedience to His Word, and which would express his faith in the Lord to carry out His promises (cf. 1 Pet. 1:14-16).

Genesis 17:2, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.”

The phrase “**I will establish**” is inaccurate but rather should be translated “I will make a reality the covenant that has already been established.” The reason for this is that the Lord is reassuring Abram that now at this point in his life He will make good on His promise to give him and Sarai a child. This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that the covenant the Lord is making with Abram in Genesis 17 is “not” a new one but based upon the original one made when the Lord called Abram out of Haran.

The covenant that the Lord will make with Abram in Genesis 17 is an enlargement upon the covenant the Lord made with Abram in Genesis 12:1-3. In Genesis 13:14-17, the Lord expanded upon this original covenant recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and specifically, made promises to give the land of Canaan to Abram and his descendants. Then, in Genesis 15:1-6, the Lord promises Abram that his descendants would be innumerable and that he and Sarai would have a son together.

The promises in this covenant serve as the foundation of Abram’s faith since faith must have a foundation, which is the character and integrity of God.

The Lord’s promise “**I will multiply you (Abram) exceedingly**” emphasizes the result of the Lord making the covenant with Abram a reality and the “degree” to which the Lord would multiply Abram’s descendants.

Genesis 17:3-4, “Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations.’”

The fact that Abram fell on his face was a visible demonstration of Abram’s humility and thankfulness to the Lord and that he was worshipping the Lord. He was thanking the Lord for treating him in grace meaning that God treated him in a manner in which he did not deserve.

The Lord not only promised Abram that he would have many descendants but he would also be the father or progenitor or ancestor of many nations, thus expanding or enlarging upon His previous

promises to Abram as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-17 and 15:1-6.

The Lord confirmed this promise by changing Abram’s name to Abraham.

Genesis 17:5, “No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

Abram was a fairly common name in those days and means, “exalted father” or “my father is exalted.” It was given to him by his father Terah to honor the moon god Nannar, which Terah worshipped and not the God of the Bible.

On the other hand, the name Abraham means, “father of a multitude” and became a declaration of God’s purpose and of His covenant with Abraham, which God would accomplish by making Abraham prolific so that not only populous nations but also kings would be among his descendants.

The change of name would be a reminder to Abraham of the Lord’s guarantee to give him and Sarai a child of their own.

Merrill F. Unger commenting on Genesis 17:4-5, writes, “As the patriarch’s faith was strengthened to grasp God’s all-sufficiency to keep His promise by his talk with *El Shaddai*, his name was changed to signify his faith’s appropriation of God’s Word.” (Unger’s Commentary on the Old Testament, page 63).

The Lord’s promise to Abram to make him “**the father of a multitude of nations**” would be fulfilled in a two-fold sense: (1) Biological (2) Spiritual.

The promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled in a “biological” sense through Hagar where he is the progenitor of the Ishmaelites (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18). It would be fulfilled through Keturah, the Midianites and others (Gen. 25:1-4); through Isaac and Rebekah, the Edomites (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43). This interpretation is substantiated by the genealogies of Keturah (Gen. 25:1-4), Ishmael (Gen. 25:12-18) and Edom (Gen. 36).

When the Lord promises Abraham that he will be the progenitor of many nations, it includes the

nation of Israel since in Genesis 12:2, the Lord promised Abraham that He would make him a **“great nation”** (cf. Gen. 18:18). Therefore, Abraham’s “biological” descendants through Isaac are the Jews, the nation of Israel whereas through Hagar and Keturah, it is the Arabs.

The Lord’s promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a “spiritual” sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). This is how the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him **“all the families of the earth would be blessed”** would be accomplished.

In Galatians, the apostle Paul teaches that the “Seed” God covenanted with Abraham found its fulfillment both uniquely in the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, it found its fulfillment in a collective sense in both Jew and Gentile alike, who expressed faith alone in Christ alone resulting in them being the beneficiaries of regeneration and the baptism of the Spirit (Gal. 3:15-29). In Romans, Paul teaches that God’s promise to make Abraham a father of many nations is fulfilled in the sense that they reproduce Abraham’s faith (Rom. 4:13-17). Therefore, regardless of whether or not an individual is Jewish or Gentile biologically or racially, anyone who exercises faith alone in Christ alone becomes a “spiritual” descendant of Abraham.

There are no racial distinctions during the present church age dispensation that began on the day of Pentecost in June of 30 A.D. as recorded in Acts 2 and will end at the rapture of the church, which is imminent (1 Thess. 4:13-18; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10).

Any biological or racial Jew who believes in Christ as his Savior, is considered by God to be “church” or “body of Christ” since according to 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:26-28, there are no racial distinctions in the church age.

After the conclusion of the church age, any Jew racially or biologically that accepts Christ as his Savior during the Tribulation dispensation (aka “Daniel’s 70th week) that follows the church age, becomes a member of “regenerate” or “born-again” Israel. The same follows for the Gentiles who believe in Christ outside of the church age.

They become “regenerate” or “born-again” Gentiles.

According to Romans 9-11, God is not through with Abraham’s “physical” or “biological” progeny, the Jews, since many will accept Christ as Savior during Daniel’s 70th week becoming a part of “born-again” or “regenerate” Israel.

Genesis 17:6, “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.”

The Lord’s promise to Abraham that He would make him **“exceedingly fruitful”** means that the Lord would give Abraham the capacity to be prolific in that he would be the progenitor of a multitude of children in both a biological and spiritual sense.

The Lord’s promise to Abraham that He would **“make nations”** from Abraham refers to his “national” posterity Israel, as well as the Arab nations through Hagar and Keturah. It also refers to his “spiritual” posterity, the church and of course “regenerate” Israel.

The Lord’s promise to Abraham that **“kings will come forth from you”** is a reference to primarily the kings of Israel (Gen. 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 17:7, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”

The Lord’s promise to Abraham **“I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations”** refers to the fact that those who like Abraham exercise faith alone in Christ alone will enter into this covenant and become the beneficiaries of it. This would include the church and regenerate Israel and regenerate Gentiles who lived in dispensations outside of the church age.

The Abrahamic covenant like the Palestinian, Davidic and New covenants were given directly to regenerate Israel according to Romans 9:1-5 but the church and Gentile believers in dispensations outside of the church age benefit from these covenants (cf. Gal. 3).

The Lord promises that the Abrahamic covenant is “eternal.”

The promise “**to be God to you and to your descendants after you**” refers to the fact that those like Abraham who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would enter into an eternal relationship with the Triune God.

Genesis 17:8, “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

The promise to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants refers to primarily born-again Israel and the church indirectly since she is the bride of Christ who will reign with Christ in Jerusalem over the entire earth during Christ’s millennial reign.

Genesis 17:9-14 records that the Lord gives Abraham and his descendants the ritual of circumcision to observe as a sign to ratify the covenant that He established with Abraham when he left Haran.

Genesis 17:9, “God said further to Abraham, ‘Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.’”

Genesis 17:10, “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised.”

“**Covenant**” is the noun *b^erith* (tyr!B+), which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other’s behalf.

“**My covenant**” is a reference to the unconditional covenant that the Lord established with Abraham when he left Haran as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and was enlarged upon in Genesis 13:14-17, 15:1-6 and 17:1-8 and which covenant is called by theologians, the “Abrahamic” covenant.

Theologically (used of relations between God and man) a “covenant” denotes a gracious undertaking entered into by God for the benefit and blessing of man, and specifically of those men who by faith receive the promises and commit themselves to the obligations, which this undertaking involves.

The “Abrahamic” covenant that the Lord established with Abraham denoted the Lord’s gracious undertaking for the benefit of Abraham and his descendants.

The “Abrahamic” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness.

An unconditional covenant which binds the one making the covenant to a certain course of action, may have blessings attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient. That response is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God. The blessings that Abraham would receive were conditioned on his obedience to observe circumcision.

In Genesis 17:1-8, the Lord enumerates His promises to Abraham and now in Genesis 17:9-14, the Lord presents the responsibilities of Abraham and his descendants.

“**You shall keep**” is the verb *shamar* (rm#v#), which means, “to observe conscientiously” in the sense that Abraham and his descendants were to be careful, thoughtful, heedful, attentive, and meticulous in conforming their actions in compliance with the practice of circumcision.

“**Your descendants**” refers to Abraham’s “biological” descendants, the nation of Israel.

Genesis 17:11, “And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you.”

“**Circumcised**” is the verb *mul* (lWm) (mool), which refers to the act of cutting of the foreskin of the male’s penis and was given as a sign to Abraham and his biological descendants that they were set apart by God and yet was not given to justify or saved them.

Circumcision was not exclusive to Israel but was also performed by several Asian Oriental groups such as the Muslims as well as the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and was also practiced by Egyptian priests and those who wanted to be initiated into their sacred mysteries.

Circumcision among these nations was a rite of passage but was not performed on infants, thus the

sign of circumcision given to Abraham to be performed on infants eight days old was unique in the ancient world.

The ceremony of circumcision consisted in cutting away the foreskin, the hood or fold of skin covering the head of the male organ, which was generally done by means of a sharp knife, but in more primitive times sharp stones were used (Ex. 4:25; Josh. 5:2, flint knives).

As a rule this act was performed by the father (Gen. 17:23), although it might be done by any Israelite, and, if necessary, women as well (Ex. 4:25), but never by a Gentile. In later times, in the case of adults, a doctor performed circumcision and the Jews of the present day entrust it to a person called a *mohel* appointed especially for the purpose.

At first, this requirement seems to be strange but the Lord gave it to Abraham and his biological descendants as a “sign” of His covenant with Abraham and his descendants. Circumcision would symbolize in a distinct way the purpose and results of the Abrahamic covenant.

The emphasis of the covenant was on the Promised Seed, the Lord Jesus Christ and on the abundance of progeny, which would accrue to Abraham (Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, page 333).

Circumcision was a sign only to the individual concerned, his parents and his wife and was not to be shown to people in general, but was uniquely personal.

Henry M. Morris, writes, “To his parents it would confirm that they had been faithful in transmitting the seed to the son with whom God had blessed their union and that they were trying to follow God’s will in training him. To his wife, it would give assurance that he indeed was a descendant of Abraham, to whom she could joyfully submit in the marriage relation, in faith that God would bless their home and their children. To the man himself, it would be a daily testimony that he and his family were consecrated to the God of Abraham and that they shared in his calling and ministry to the world” (*The Genesis Record*, page 334).

The sexual act and reproductive organs and processes were created by God to be enjoyed by

both the man and the woman in marriage and received the full blessing of God (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). But with the Fall of Adam and the Woman, the sex organs and sex act became vehicles of sin and corruption since Satan led man into sexual debauchery, corrupting the institution of marriage in every conceivable way in order to stop God’s purpose for man and his redemption.

Therefore, we see that another symbolic meaning of the act of circumcision where the cutting of the foreskin spoke of a surgical removal, a complete separation, from the sins of the flesh so widely prevalent in the world around Abraham and his descendants.

The nations and tribes around Abraham were involved in sins largely centered in the misuse of the male organ in adultery, fornication and sodomy.

Circumcision symbolized to the Jewish man that he was a member of an elect nation, a peculiar people, distinctly holy before God, in relation to sexual conduct, so it came indirectly to speak of holiness in every phase of life.

Leviticus 20:7, “You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God.”

Therefore, the organ of the male body that was used for procreation is consecrated to God (cf. Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4) and failure to submit to circumcision demonstrated one’s overt unwillingness to obey the Lord. The penalty for failing to submit to circumcision meant exile from Israel and from any inheritance in it and in fact resulted in capital punishment.

In Exodus 4, Moses failed to circumcise his sons because of his Egyptian wife Zipporah, and was as a result almost killed by the Lord for failing to do so but Zipporah grudgingly gave in.

Circumcision has hygienic value since cancer of the penis has a much higher incidence in uncircumcised males.

Henry M. Morris, “If the nation so formed was indeed to endure and to be a witness for God through all generations to come, then it must be physically strong and clean” (*The Genesis Record*, page 333).

“**Sign**” is the noun *’oth* (tw{a}), which refers to the distinguishing mark upon the organ of procreation among Abraham’s biological descendants who had entered into the Abrahamic covenant and served as confirmation of Abraham’s lineage to fulfill their covenantal responsibility.

The ordinance of circumcision could not save man but was to be the distinguishing sign of the Jewish nation from the other nations. God has not commanded circumcision of the flesh for Christians. Circumcision of the flesh is useless unless there is a circumcision of the heart.

Deuteronomy 30:6, “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

Colossians 2:11, “and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”

Your faith in Christ is what is important to God and not whether you are circumcised or not. Abraham was first justified by his faith and then he was given circumcision as a badge or a mark that he was saved and set apart by God.

The Jews in Paul’s day believed that because they were physical descendants of Abraham that they could ride into heaven on the coattails of Abraham. They believed that they were sons of Abraham by right of circumcision, when in reality those who believe God are the true sons of Abraham.

The 1st Church Council in Jerusalem that is recorded in Acts 15 deemed that a person does not get saved through the practice of circumcision but through faith alone in Christ, thus the Gentiles were not required to be circumcised.

Galatians 6:15, “For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.”

Genesis 17:12, “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations, a servant who is born in the house or who is bought with

money from any foreigner, who is not of your descendants.”

The phrase “**every male**” indicates that there were to be no exceptions, every male who was a biological descendant of Abraham was required to be circumcised.

The phrase “**every male**” also exempts females for circumcision of females in ancient times was a regular custom among some races or tribes.

All infants who were descendants of Abraham were to be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Modern medicine has discovered that blood-clotting agents do not take full effect until eight days after birth. Of course, God knew this all along since He is omniscient and is the One who designed and created the human body.

Genesis 17:13, “A servant who is born in your house or who is bought with your money shall surely be circumcised; thus shall My covenant be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.”

Also, notice that any slave bought by a descendant of Abraham would also have to be circumcised, thus the servants and slaves were also brought into covenant relation with God and became part of His people.

Genesis 17:14, “But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

Genesis 17:14 records that there were to be no exceptions, any biological descendant of Abraham would have to be circumcised otherwise, he would be separated from those who were circumcised among Abraham’s biological descendants.

Genesis 17:15-22 records the Lord promising Abraham that his wife Sarai will be the progenitrix or in other words, the mother of numerous nations and kings.

Genesis 17:15, “Then God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name.’”

In Genesis 17:3, 7, 8, 9, 15, 18, 19, 22, and 23, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit employs the noun *Elohim*, “**God**” in order to emphasize God’s sovereignty and omnipotence

indicating that God has sovereignly determined to give Abraham and Sarah the capacity to have a child in their old age.

The noun *Elohim*, “**God**” emphasizes to the reader that God is omnipotent or all-powerful and is able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place.

Even though from the human perspective, it would seem impossible that Abraham and Sarah could have children when they were one hundred and ninety years old respectively.

Luke 1:37, “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

The name “**Sarai**” means, “my princess” indicating her honor was confined to one family into which she was born whereas “Sarah” means, “princess of multitudes” signifying that the kings of Israel would descend from her, even the greatest of Israel’s kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“**Sarah**” is the only woman in the Bible whose name is changed and whose age at death is detail (Gen. 23:1), which reveals her importance to the plan of salvation.

“**Sarai**” her birth-name looks back on her noble descent whereas “**Sarah**” emphasizes her covenant relationship with Abraham and the transcendent God and looks ahead or foreshadows her noble descendants.

Genesis 17:16, “**I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.**”

“**Bless**” is the piel (intensive) form of the verb *barakh* (Er[^]B*), which is used twice in Genesis 17:16 indicating that the Lord would endue Sarah with power to not only have a child with Abraham but that she would be endued with power to be the mother of nations and kings. This is the first time that the Lord had informed Abraham that he would have a son through Sarah.

Up to this point, he believed that Ishmael was the son of promise. The promise that Sarah would become “**a mother of nations**” refers to both Abraham and Sarah’s “national” posterity Israel and also their “spiritual” posterity, namely,

“regenerate” or “born-again” Israelites and the Gentiles.

The “**nations**” in view here are not the Arab nations or the Ishmaelites since they are not descendants of Sarah but rather of Keturah and Hagar.

The promise that Sarah would become the mother of kings refers to the kings of Israel, both saved and unsaved as well as the king of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 17:17, “**Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said in his heart, ‘Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?’**”

The fact that Abraham fell on his face after receiving this promise demonstrated his great humility and thankfulness to the Lord and caused him to worship God.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship, “Worship is the believer’s response of all that they are –mind, emotions, will and body–to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience and its practical side in objective obedience to God’s revealed will. Worship is a loving response that’s balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better” (Real Worship, 26).

If we paraphrase Wiersbe’s definition, we could say the following: Abraham is worshipping the Lord in that he is responding in his mind (said in his heart), emotions (laughter), and body (falling on his face) to what God is (omnipotent) and His promise to give him and Sarah a child in their old age and he is responding to God’s ability to bring it to pass.

Abraham was so overcome with joy at the Lord’s promise to give him and Sarah a baby boy that he fell on his face in worship of the Lord and laughed. He did not laugh out of doubt but out of joy since the Lord did not rebuke him for his lack of faith as the Lord did with Sarah when she laughed after hearing the Lord promise Abraham again that he would get Sarah pregnant as recorded in Genesis 18:13.

Genesis 17:18, “And Abraham said to God, ‘Oh that Ishmael might live before You!’”

Abraham mentions Ishmael not because he does not believe that God can give him and Sarah a child but rather he fears that this promise would cut off Ishmael from the Lord’s favor but as we will see this is not the case.

Genesis 17:19, “But God said, ‘No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.’”

Though God would bless Ishmael, He emphasized to Abraham that His covenant with him was with Isaac alone and his seed.

Now, notice that in Genesis 17:17, Abraham said in his heart to himself **“Will a child be born to a man one hundred years old? And will Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?”** indicating that the Lord in His omniscience, read Abraham’s mind.

Psalms 94:11a, “The LORD knows the thoughts of man.”

The Lord responds to the question in Abraham’s heart even though Abraham never audibly expressed it to the Lord.

The name **“Isaac”** means, “laughter” and was designated by God to be the name given to Abraham’s son that he would have with Sarah since it expresses Abraham’s joyful faith in the Lord’s ability to fulfill this promise.

The fact that God directs Abraham to name this child of promise Isaac before he is born foreshadows, God directing Joseph in Matthew 1:31 and Mary in Luke 1:31 to name their first born son before his birth, “Jesus.”

Also, like the birth of Jesus, the birth of Isaac would be miraculous.

“My covenant” refers to the covenant that the Lord established with Abraham when he left Haran as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and was enlarged upon in Genesis 13:14-17, Genesis 15:1-6 and Genesis 17:1-18.

The “Abrahamic” covenant was an “unconditional” covenant meaning its fulfillment

depended upon the Lord’s faithfulness and not Abraham’s.

The “Abrahamic” covenant included not only “personal” (Isaac and land of Canaan) and “national” (Israel) promises to Abraham but also contained the “universal” promise of eternal salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah.

The promise **“I will establish My covenant with him (Isaac) for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him”** indicates that the Promised Seed, the Savior, Jesus Christ would come through the line of Isaac rather than Ishmael.

Therefore, we see that Genesis 17:19, God is giving Abraham more information concerning the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15 who would defeat sin and Satan.

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth (Gen. 4:25-26; Luke 3:38) and Shem (Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36) and then, as recorded in Genesis 12:3 God informs Abraham that Jesus Christ would be his descendant.

Galatians 3:16, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

Genesis 17:20, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

The promise that God would **“bless him (Ishmael) and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly”** means that God would not exclude Ishmael from blessing but rather He would endue Ishmael and his descendants with the ability to be prolific in terms of posterity.

God promises Abraham that Ishmael would be the father of twelve princes, which would comprise a great nation corresponding to Isaac who would be the father of the twelve tribes, which would comprise the nation of Israel.

Genesis 25:12-16 records the fulfillment of this promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael and his descendants.

Genesis 17:21, “But My covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you at this season next year.”

Again, God emphasizes a third time that He was establishing His covenant with Isaac and not Ishmael indicating that Isaac was in the line of Christ.

God specifies the time informing Abraham that Isaac would be born one year from the time that He made this promise.

Genesis 17:22, “When He finished talking with him, God went up from Abraham.”

Genesis 17:23-27 records Abraham obeying the Lord’s command to circumcise himself and all the males in his household.

Genesis 17:23, “Then Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all the servants who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s household, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the very same day, as God had said to him.”

Genesis 17:24, “Now Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.”

Genesis 17:25, “And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin.”

Genesis 17:26, “In the very same day Abraham was circumcised, and Ishmael his son.”

Genesis 17:27, “All the men of his household, who were born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.”

Notice that Abraham does not procrastinate but immediately the very same day he obeyed the Lord and implemented the sign of circumcision.

In Genesis 17:23-27, we see Abraham conscientiously observing the practice of circumcision, which was to be the sign or symbol

of God’s covenant with Abraham. Abraham’s obedience demonstrated his love for God.

John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will observe conscientiously My commandments.”

Abraham’s obedience demonstrated his love for God in the sense that he honored, respected, revered God and was dedicated and devoted to Him to the point of self-sacrifice.

Abraham’s obedience was the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by him to God’s revelation of Himself since Abraham had been created and redeemed by God for His purpose and good pleasure.

The “objective” in God revealing Himself and His ways to men through the living Word, Jesus Christ and the written Word, the Bible is so that men might love Him, experience fellowship with Him, glorify Him and worship Him.

1 Timothy 1:5, “But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.”

The believer who thinks that *gnosis*, “**knowledge**” of God is the ultimate reason for the Word of God will be arrogant. On the other hand, the believer who achieves *epignosis*, “**an experiential knowledge**” of God is affected by God’s revelation of Himself and His ways and will have a love for both God and all men.

Here we see that Abraham is affected by God’s revelation of Himself, His ways. Abraham possesses an *epignosis*, “**an experiential knowledge**” meaning that he has personally encountered through the process of fellowship, the love God has for him as this divine-love is revealed by the Holy Spirit. He has been affected by this encounter with the love that God has directed toward him resulting in the gaining of practical spiritual wisdom and more of the character of Christ.

God’s revelation of Himself and His ways is not so that the believer can simply acquire knowledge but rather so that a transformation of character might take place in the believer’s life where this knowledge of God and His ways affects the believer’s lifestyle and priorities.

1 Corinthians 8:1, “Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge (*gnosis*) makes arrogant, but love edifies.”

Abraham’s obedience was confirmation that he indeed was obeying the command to “**walk before Me, and be blameless**” in Genesis 17:1 and experiencing fellowship with the Lord.

Fellowship with the Lord: (1) Only believers can experience (2) Experiencing God’s love for us (3) Experience of loving God and others (4) Experiencing eternal life (5) Experience of being in the presence of God (6) Worshipping the Lord (7) Lost due to sin but recovered through confession of sin (8) Based upon obedience to the Father’s will.

Not only did Abraham circumcise himself and his son Ishmael but also everyone in his household including servants he had purchased and those born in his household while their parents were in service to him. Even though Ishmael would not inherit the promises with Isaac, Abraham circumcised him desiring that he receive the spiritual blessings that would originate from the fulfillment of those promises.

The Lord’s promise that He would make His covenant with Isaac and not Ishmael meant that the Messiah would be a descendant of Isaac and in no way excluded Isaac from sharing in the blessings that originate through faith in the Messiah and the same holds true for everyone in Abraham’s household.

Abraham’s obedience to the law of circumcision demonstrated his faith since all the males in his household would be incapacitated for several days thus leaving his home and possessions with no protection at all except of course for the Lord.

Undoubtedly, Abraham met resistance and many questions but nevertheless, his entire household received the sign of circumcision. The fact that all the males submitted to circumcision based upon the word of Abraham is a testimony to the fact that Abraham was highly respected among those in his household and those who were servants. At this time, everyone knew that God was with Abraham and if this was what God required, they along with Abraham would obey.

Genesis 18

Genesis 18 is one of the most fascinating chapters in the Bible. Actually, Genesis 18-19 constitutes one integrated story but we will study it a section at a time and like the stories of the Flood in the days of Noah and the Tower of Babel rebellion, it has a chiasmic structure this time focusing on the announcement of the destruction of Sodom (19:12-13).

Genesis 18:1-8 records the appearance of the preincarnate Christ and two elect angels before Abraham and in turn, Abraham showing hospitality to them. Genesis 19:1 clearly indicates that there were two elect angels who accompany the Lord in His visit with Abraham.

Abraham’s treatment of his visitors recorded in Genesis 18 is in direct contrast with the Sodomites treatment of the angels recorded in Genesis 19.

This chapter demonstrates that Abraham was indeed the “**friend of God**” as stated in James 2:23 since the Lord does not withhold from Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham debates this intention with the Lord.

James 2:23, “and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God.”

Genesis 18 reveals that Abraham was experiencing intimacy with the Lord. Intimacy is a close, familiar and usually affectionate or loving, personal relationship with another person or group and in relation to people, intimacy is a close association with or detailed knowledge or deep understanding of a person. Abraham has a close, familiar and affectionate personal relationship with the Lord, and possessed a detailed knowledge of His will and deep understanding of Him.

Jeremiah 9:24, “but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, declares the LORD.”

Genesis 18:1, “Now the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, while he was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day.”

“**Appeared**” is the verb *ra’ah* (חָרָא), which is in the causative-reflexive niphil form meaning that the Lord “caused Himself to appear” to Abraham.

The “causative-reflexive” scheme in Hebrew is usually “hithpaal” but in some cases the “niphil” is used. In these verbs the subject causes the action to happen to himself, thus the causative-reflexive niphil form of the verb *ra’ah* in Genesis 18:1 indicates that the Lord “caused Himself to appear” to Abraham. This same form of the verb appears in Exodus 6:3 in relation to this passage.

Exodus 6:3, “and I appeared (causative-reflexive form of the *ra’ah*, “to make myself to be seen, or appear”) to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, LORD, I did not make Myself known to them.”

The fact that the Lord “**appeared**” to Abram is a “theophany,” or “Christophany,” which is a theological term used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (יהוה), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Abraham and Sarah and reconfirming His covenant promise to Abraham.

The Lord visits Abraham to confirm the promise recorded in Genesis 17:19 to give Abraham and Sarah a child and pronounce its swift fulfillment.

According to Genesis 13:18, “**the oaks of Mamre**” were a grove of terebinth trees that were owned by Mamre who was chief of the Amorites who was allied with Abraham helping him defeat the Eastern kings (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24). They were located in “Hebron,” which was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

The circumstantial clause “**he (Abraham) was sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day**”

indicates that Abraham had finished his morning’s work and is resting during the hottest part of the day as was common among the Orientals since the midday heat was dangerous, especially for a man Abraham’s age.

Genesis 18:2, “**When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth.**”

In Genesis 18:2, the storyline switches to describing events through Abraham’s eyes.

“**He lifted up his eyes,**” indicates that Abraham was either taking a nap or was in prayer.

When Abraham initially looked up, he observed what appeared to him to be simply three men who were standing opposite him at a distance, which is the Oriental equivalent of knocking at the door. This is why the narrator describes these three visitors as “**three men.**”

The fact that they were standing at a distance opposite Abraham is indicated in that he ran to them.

“**Looked**” is the verb *ra’ah*, which means, that initially Abraham “observed” what appeared to be simply three men standing opposite of him at a distance.

“**Behold**” is the interjection *hinneh*, which marks Abraham’s surprise at seeing these three since he did not notice them approaching.

“**Saw**” is once again the verb *ra’ah*, which means that that after initially observing what appeared to be three men standing opposite him at a distance, Abraham took a closer look or we could say he looked again and this time noticed that it was the Lord.

This means that at first Abraham did not notice it was the Lord but after looking again, he did and this indicated by the repetition of the verb *ra’ah*.

The fact that Abraham noticed it was the Lord after looking a second time is indicated by his response to these three visitors and his addressing only one of them.

The fact that Abraham ran to meet what appeared to be three men indicates that Abraham has recognized someone special and significant.

In the ancient world, it was normal to extend hospitality to strangers but not to the extent that one would run to meet one's guests and fall prostrate before them. Abraham is not displaying the normal hospitality towards these three visitors but rather an extraordinary and unusual form of hospitality because he senses that he is in the presence of the Lord. Though it was not unusual in Abraham's day to bow before those who possessed authority and power, it was unusual to run to meet strangers since usually one would only do so to meet a loved one.

When Abraham encountered Melchizedek, he did not bow to him or address him in such a manner as we see Abraham doing in Genesis 18:2-3, even though Melchizedek was superior to him in rank and authority due to his position as priest of the Most High God.

All this would indicate that Abraham recognizes that the Lord Himself came in human form to pay him a visit.

The fact that Abraham runs to greet these three visitors and in particular one of them, the Lord, indicates that Abraham recognized that the Lord came in human form to pay him a visit. Prior to this encounter with the Lord in Genesis 18, Abraham had experienced being in the presence of the Lord on three different occasions as recorded in Genesis 12:7, 15:1-18 and 17:1-22 and if so, then it seems likely that he would have recognized Him.

“**Bowed himself**” is the verb *shachah* (h^j*v*) (shaw-khaw), which means, “to worship, to bow down” and in the hithpalel (causative-reflective) stem indicates the subject is willingly bowing to the ground.

When the verb is used with reference to God, it means, “to worship” (Gen. 22:5; 24:26, 48, 52) and when used with reference to men, it means, “to bow down” in order to show honor and respect. Therefore, since we have determined and given evidence that Abraham recognized and was aware that he was entertaining the Lord, the verb

shachah in Genesis 18:2 should be translated “worshipped.”

Genesis 18:3, “and said, ‘My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, please do not pass your servant by.’”

Further indicating that Abraham recognizes that the Lord Himself has paid him a visit is that Abraham addresses only one of these three men. If Abraham did not recognize the Lord, he would have addressed all three but he doesn't, which indicates that he recognizes one to be superior to the other two.

The phrase “**your servant**” further indicates that Abraham recognizes that the Lord has paid him a visit since the pronomial suffix translated “**your**” is in the singular indicating Abraham is calling himself the servant of only one of the three. If the pronomial suffix was in the plural, it would mean that Abraham is calling himself the servant of all three but this is not the case.

Also, the verbs in Genesis 18:3 are all used in the singular rather than the plural further indicating that Abraham is addressing only one of the three. The fact that Abraham singles out one of the three indicates he recognizes the superiority of this one over the others and the reason that he does is that he recognizes that the Lord has paid him a visit.

The fact that Abraham addresses only one of the three and calls only one of the three *`adhon*, “**Lord**” indicates that Abraham recognizes the authority of only one of them who is the Lord Himself and appropriately addresses Him with the noun *`adhon* (/w)da*), which denotes the idea of authority or lordship. Therefore, it should be translated not in a lower case “**lord**” but with an upper case “**Lord**.”

Now, there are those who teach that Abraham did not recognize that the Lord had paid him a visit until the Lord predicted Sarah's pregnancy the following year and they use Hebrews 13:2 to support this claim.

Hebrews 13:2, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Hebrews 13:2 could have reference to Lot, Jacob and Joshua, who also entertained angels and

furthermore, this passage is used with reference to angels and not the Lord, the passage does not say that some entertained the Lord without knowing it but rather angels!

Genesis 18:4, “Please let a little water be brought and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree.”

The washing of feet was the first offering of hospitality, which provided much appreciated comfort to the traveler who had walk dusty roads in sandal footwear. Abraham has the Lord and the two angels rest under the famous terebinth trees that were in Mamre in Hebron.

Genesis 18:5, “and I will bring a piece of bread, that you may refresh yourselves; after that you may go on, since you have visited your servant. And they said, ‘So do, as you have said.’”

Genesis 18:6, “So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah, and said, ‘Quickly, prepare three measures of fine flour, knead it and make bread cakes.’”

Genesis 18:7, “Abraham also ran to the herd, and took a tender and choice calf and gave it to the servant, and he hurried to prepare it.”

Notice how rapidly Abraham moves from task to task, personally selecting the best calf from his flocks and every step of its preparation.

Genesis 18:8, “He took curds and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and placed it before them; and he was standing by them under the tree as they ate.”

“**Curds**” are the coagulated state of the fatty part of the milk, corresponding to the modern *leben* or yogurt.

“**Milk**” was highly esteemed in the ancient Near East because of its energy and that it was easy to digest.

The urgency in which Abraham serves his guests further indicates that Abraham is aware that he is entertaining the Lord and two of His angels.

Notice that initially, Abraham told his guests that he would bring them a “**piece of bread**” but instead he prepares a banquet for them.

The fact that Abraham stood by his guests while they ate in order to respond to their wishes was the Bedouin custom of the day, and which is still practiced today.

Therefore, we see in Genesis 18:4-8, the great hospitality of Abraham, which serves as an example for us as believers here in the church age who are commanded in Scripture to practice hospitality.

1 Peter 4:9, “Be hospitable to one another without complaint.”

Since believers are members of the body of Christ according to 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, Ephesians 3:6 and Colossians 3:15 of which body, Christ is the head according to Ephesians 4:15, 5:23, Colossians 1:18, then when believers practice hospitality towards one another, they are in fact doing it to Christ.

Matthew 25:40, “The King will answer and say to them (those Gentile believers who identified with Jewish believers during the Tribulation period), ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’”

Genesis 18:9-15 records the Lord’s prophecy and promise of the birth of Isaac, which was for the benefit of Sarah.

Genesis 18:9, “Then they said to him, ‘Where is Sarah your wife?’ And he said, ‘There, in the tent.’”

The Lord and the two elect angels ask Abraham a rhetorical question that is designed to politely open the conversation about Sarah. The promise that the Lord is about to make to Abraham that Sarah will conceive a child must be heard by her since she must conceive by faith, and therefore the promise must be made to her.

Hebrews 11:11, “By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.”

In the days of Abraham, it was customary that the women did not sit with men at dinner, at least not with strangers, but confined themselves to their own place. Therefore, we see that Sarah is out of

sight but she must not be out of hearing so that she can hear the promise and accept it by faith.

The interjection *hinneh*, “**there**” indicates that Abraham is pointing in the exact place where Sarah was located, namely, inside the tent.

“Oriental courtesy perhaps in those days already forbade to all except intimates to inquire after a wife. These visitors give indication of their authority by making the inquiry” (H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, volume 1, pages 539-540).

The fact that the Lord and the two angels inquire as to the whereabouts of Sarah by naming her reveals to Abraham further that his guests are not of this world.

Genesis 18:10, “He said, ‘I will surely return to you at this time next year; and behold, Sarah your wife will have a son.’ And Sarah was listening at the tent door, which was behind him.”

We see that after the Lord and His two angels had finished eating lunch that the conversation begins and the purpose of the visit is revealed. The scene concerns the Lord and Sarah but as a married woman she apparently stays inside the tent out of sight of the visitors while the Lord addresses her by talking to Abraham.

In Genesis 17:15-21, the Lord prophesied to Abraham that he and Sarah would have a child who they would name Isaac. The Scriptures seem to imply that this prophecy was unknown to Sarah because Abraham didn’t tell her but here in Genesis 18:10-15, the promise that she will conceive a child with Abraham is made to her.

This promise in Genesis 18:10 is giving Abraham more details regarding the Lord’s original promise in Genesis 15:4 that his heir would be a natural born son. Then as we studied last evening in Genesis 17:16-21, the Lord guaranteed that Sarah would bear this natural born son.

Now, in Genesis 18:10, a time limit is set for the fulfillment of the promise. The promise “**I will surely return to you at this time next year**” does “not” mean that the Lord would visibly appear to Abraham again in a theophany or Christophany at the same time the following year. But rather it means that He would intervene on behalf of

Abraham and Sarah and exercise His omnipotence to fulfill this promise that Sarah would have a child with Abraham.

This interpretation is confirmed since the Lord did “not” visibly appear to Abraham the following year but rather the Lord exercised His omnipotence and enabled Abraham to impregnate Sarah.

The promise that Sarah would conceive a child with Abraham in her old age was based upon God’s Word and power.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

From the human perspective, the fulfillment of the promise was impossible but from the divine perspective, nothing is impossible with an omnipotent God.

Luke 1:37, “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

The Lord plainly reveals Himself through this promise since only the Lord could make such a promise to Sarah.

Romans 4:17, “(as it is written, ‘A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU’) in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.”

The Lord is making a promise that demands faith on the part of Sarah since the omnipotence of God is appropriated by means of faith.

Matthew 17:20, “And He said to them, ‘Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.’”

Genesis 18:11, “Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; Sarah was past childbearing.”

Abraham was ninety-nine years of age when he received this promise from the Lord since Genesis

21:5 records that Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born.

Genesis 18:10 records the Lord promising Abraham that Sarah would have a child at the same time the following year.

Sarah was eighty-nine years of age when she received this promise from the Lord since Genesis 17:17 reveals that Sarai was ten years younger than Abraham.

Genesis 18:11 records that Sarah was already in menopause and would have to be the beneficiary of the Lord's omnipotence in order for her get pregnant and the promise of a child be fulfilled.

Genesis 18:12, "Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'"

Notice that Sarah laughed to herself, inaudibly upon hearing the Lord's promise to give her a child in her old age. From the human perspective this promise was utterly ridiculous. Sarah's laugh was due to unbelief since she knew that physically it was no longer possible for Abraham and her to enjoy sexual relations again.

As we noted in Genesis 17:17, unlike Sarah, Abraham did not laugh out of a lack of faith since the Lord did not rebuke him for his lack of faith as He did with Sarah when she laughed. This interpretation is substantiated by Romans 4:16-22, which confirms that when this promise was made to Abraham, he believed that God could deliver on this promise.

Hebrews 11:11 teaches that Sarah's unbelief was temporary since she also later on believed that God could deliver on His promise to give him and Abraham the ability to have a child together. We must not be too hard on Sarah for we must remember that she laughed "not" out of arrogance but because of a life of long disappointment resulting in hopelessness and sadness.

Also, we must understand that unlike Abraham Sarah did "not" know who these visitors were and it seemed ridiculous for a strange man to come into their home and make such a promise to her husband.

"**I have become old**" is the verb *balah* (hl*B*), which refers to something that is used daily and

has become worn out by time and use, thus it can mean, "to wear out, to waste away, to become old, to decay" and indicates that Sarah was saying to herself that how could she become pregnant when she was old and worn out.

Also, notice that Sarah calls Abraham "**lord**," which is the *`adhon* (/w{dā*}), which is a term of respect for the authority of Sarah's husband Abraham.

The only thing good that Sarah said was calling her husband "**lord**," and the Lord had Moses put it down in writing as well as Peter in 1 Peter 3:1-7.

Genesis 18:13, "And the LORD said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?'"

The Lord reveals His omniscience in that He asks Abraham why did Sarah laugh when she laughed to herself, inaudibly rather than audibly.

Psalm 94:11, "The LORD knows the thoughts of man."

Now, don't miss this, remember Sarah laughed in unbelief and she thought this was an ordinary stranger and not the Lord Himself making this promise to her and Abraham, thus, we see that the Lord seeks to reveal Himself to Sarah in order to trigger her faith in the promise.

The Lord does this by revealing His omniscience to Sarah by telling her that she laughed, which she did, but to herself, inaudibly. Only she and the Lord would know that she laughed to herself, thus, by revealing to Sarah that it was indeed the Lord Himself making this promise to Abraham that she would have a child the following year, the Lord caused her to exercise faith in His promise to give her a child in her old age.

The Lord addresses Abraham rather than Sarah since he is the authority in the marriage (see Eph. 5:23) and was responsible for informing Sarah of His promise to him in Genesis 15:4 but it appears he didn't inform her.

Genesis 18:14, "Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

“**Is anything too difficult for the Lord?**” is a rhetorical question that demands a negative answer, namely, that nothing is impossible for the Lord.

Jeremiah 32:27, “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”

Henry M. Morris, “He who created all things surely controls all things. He who enacted the laws of nature can change them if He wills” (The Genesis Record, page 341).

The Lord verbally reveals His identity to Abraham and Sarah by identifying Himself as the Lord and declaring His omnipotence to the both of them. Therefore, in Genesis 18:9-15, we see the Lord exercising His omniscience and proclaiming His omnipotence, which He will exercise the following year on behalf of Abraham and Sarah.

The Lord repeats the promise recorded in Genesis 18:10, “**At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah will have a son.**”

Notice that the Lord adds the expression “**at this time next year**”, thereby reaffirming the promise to Abraham that appears in Genesis 18:10 with the one made here in Genesis 18:14 to Sarah.

Genesis 18:15, “Sarah denied it however, saying, ‘I did not laugh’; for she was afraid. And He said, ‘No, but you did laugh.’”

Sarah lies to the Lord claiming that she didn’t laugh because she suddenly realized whom she was conversing with and was overwhelmed with fear that the Lord might discipline her for laughing at the promise but in His grace, He did not. The Lord gently but authoritatively rebukes Sarah for her unbelief in His ability to perform that which He has predicted would come to pass. Sarah has found out that you cannot hide sin with God (1 Jn. 1:5-10).

Hebrews 4:13, “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

Genesis 18:16-19 records the intimate fellowship that took place between the Lord and Abraham so

much so that Abraham is called in Scripture, “**the friend of God.**”

Genesis 18:16, “Then the men rose up from there, and looked down toward Sodom; and Abraham was walking with them to send them off.”

“**The men**” are the preincarnate Christ and two elect angels.

“**Looked down**” is the verb *shaqaph* ([q^v*] (shaw-kaf), which means, “to look down over a valley from a steep angle” and Genesis 18:1 records this high elevation as being the “**oaks of Mamre.**”

According to Genesis 13:18, “**the oaks of Mamre**” were a grove of terebinth trees that were owned by Mamre who was chief of the Amorites who was allied with Abraham helping him defeat the Eastern kings (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24). They were located in “Hebron,” which was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

Therefore, from this location in Hebron, 3,040 feet above sea level the Lord, the angels and Abraham looked down in a southeasterly direction toward Sodom, which according to Genesis 13:10 was located in the Jordan valley.

“The valley of the Jordan” was a tropical area **between Jericho and Zoar, 800 to 1200 feet below sea level, where crops could grow all year-round.**

“**Sodom**” was on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians “the cities of the plain.”

Genesis 18:17, “The LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do.’”

Genesis 18:18, “since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?”

Genesis 18:19, “For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the

LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.”

The Lord asks this question “not” because He did not know what to do about the wickedness of Sodom and Gomorrah. But rather He asks this question in earshot of Abraham who walking with Him and the angels and for the benefit of Abraham and the reader.

The Lord is revealing that He considers Abraham an intimate friend and that Abraham is a prophet.

Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.”

Genesis 18:17-21 reveals that Abraham was indeed the “**friend of God**” as stated in James 2:23 since the Lord does not withhold from Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah and Abraham debates this intention with the Lord.

James 2:23, “and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God.”

2 Chronicles 20:7, “Did You not, O our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever?”

Isaiah 41:8, “But you, Israel, My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham My friend.”

Abraham was a friend of God because he was obedient to God.

John 15:14, “You are My friends if you do what I command you.”

Friends do not withhold information from each other and share secrets with one another. Thus, we see that the Lord does not withhold that He is about to judge Sodom because He considers Abraham a trusted friend with whom He can confide in.

Genesis 18 reveals that Abraham was experiencing intimacy with the Lord. Intimacy is a close, familiar and usually affectionate or loving, personal relationship with another person or group

and in relation to people, intimacy is a close association with or detailed knowledge or deep understanding of a person. Abraham has a close, familiar and affectionate personal relationship with the Lord, and possessed a detailed knowledge of His will and deep understanding of Him.

Jeremiah 9:24, “but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things, declares the LORD.”

Genesis 18:17, 18

“The LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do.’”

“since Abraham will surely become a great and mighty nation, and in him all the nations of the earth will be blessed?”

In Genesis 18:18, the Lord reiterates His promise to Abraham to make him a nation that is recorded in Genesis 12:2.

“**Nation**” refers to the nation of Israel that would originate from Abraham and Sarah’s son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob.

“**Great**” refers both to numbers and to significance or impact the nation of Israel would have on both human and angelic history.

“**Mighty**” describes the vast numerical quantity of the nation of Israel.

The Lord statement that “**in him (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**” is an enlargement upon the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham “**all the families of the earth will be blessed.**”

Galatians 3:8-14 reveals that this promise in Genesis 18:18 that “**in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**” is a reference to the fact that Abraham’s descendent, Jesus Christ, would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

Galatians 3:8, “The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham,

saying, 'ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.'"

Genesis 18:19, "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

The statement "for I have chosen him (Abraham)" is incorrectly translated since "chosen" is the verb *yadha*, which means, "to know experientially the character of someone," and expresses the intimate fellowship between the Lord and Abraham.

"Keep" is the verb *shamar* (rm#v#), which means, "to observe conscientiously" in the sense that Abraham would be careful, thoughtful, heedful, attentive, and meticulous in conforming his actions in compliance with the way of the Lord.

"The way of the Lord" refers to the way or manner in which the Lord does things, which is based upon His character and nature and is expressed by His acts of righteousness and justice towards both men and angels.

"The way of the Lord" is described as "doing righteousness and justice."

Psalms 89:14, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before You."

"Righteousness" refers to conduct that is in conformity to the character and nature of God and which conduct flows from being rightly related to God through faith in Christ and is expressed by obedience to the will of God.

"Justice" refers to conduct guided by obedience to the Word of truth and thus in accordance with God's perfect standards and principles.

The statement "so that the LORD may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him," indicates that the blessings the Lord promised to Abraham in the covenant that He made with Abraham were conditioned upon him doing righteousness and justice.

Although the fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional, the "blessings" of the attached to the covenant would be conditioned upon Abraham doing righteousness and justice.

Genesis 18:20, "And the LORD said, 'The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.'"

Genesis 18:21, "I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know."

"Sodom" and "Gomorrah" were located on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians "the cities of the plain."

Genesis 13:13 describes the inhabitants of Sodom as exceedingly wicked and against the Lord meaning that they were involved in "gross" immorality, which is defined as homosexuality in Genesis 19.

Genesis 13:5-10

"Now Lot, who went with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents."

"And the land could not sustain them while dwelling together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to remain together."

"And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land."

"So Abram said to Lot, 'Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.'"

"Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me; if to the left, then I will go to the right; or if to the right, then I will go to the left."

"Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere -- this was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah -- like the

garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar."

"The valley of the Jordan" was a tropical area between Jericho and Zoar, 800 to 1200 feet below sea level, where crops could grow all year-round.

The phrase "like the garden of the Lord" is a reference to the Garden of Eden and indicates that like the Garden of Eden, the valley of the Jordan, possessed breathtaking beauty and was full of lush vegetation.

The phrase "like the land of Egypt" tones down the previous comparison and indicates that like rich fertile land of Egypt, which tempted Abram to depart from Canaan, the valley of the Jordan was also a rich fertile land.

Genesis 13:11, "So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan, and Lot journeyed eastward. Thus they separated from each other."

Genesis 13:13, "Now the men of Sodom were wicked exceedingly and sinners against the LORD."

"**Wicked**" is the adjective *ra`* (ur[^]), which describes the men of Sodom as conducting their lives independently of God and in the context of Genesis 13-19, this independence from God expressed itself in gross immorality and specifically, homosexuality.

"**Exceedingly**" is the adverb *me'odh* (da)m+) (meh-ode), which intensifies the meaning of the verb *ra`*, "wicked," thus indicating that the evil that the men of Sodom were involved was "gross" immorality, which is defined as homosexuality in Genesis 19.

"**Sinners**" is the noun *chatta* (aF*j[^]) (khaw-taw), which describes the men of Sodom as falling short of the glory of God who is holy (Rom. 3:23).

The phrase "**against the Lord**" describes the men of Sodom as opposed to the laws of God that regulated conduct between the sexes and which laws are later reflected in the Mosaic Law.

Leviticus 18:22, "You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination."

Leviticus 20:13, "If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

The prophet Jeremiah identified Sodom with adultery, deceit and lies and the encouragement of evildoers and all without any remorse.

Jeremiah 23:14, "Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: The committing of adultery and walking in falsehood; And they strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one has turned back from his wickedness. All of them have become to Me like Sodom, and her inhabitants like Gomorrah."

The prophet Ezekiel describes the inhabitants of Sodom as arrogant displaying an uncompassionate attitude towards the poor and needy.

Ezekiel 16:49, 50

"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy."

"Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it."

The prophet Isaiah states that the inhabitants of Sodom did not conceal their wicked deeds but flaunted them.

Isaiah 3:8, 9

"For Jerusalem has stumbled and Judah has fallen, because their speech and their actions are against the LORD, to rebel against His glorious presence."

"The expression of their faces bears witness against them, and they display their sin like Sodom; They do not even conceal it. Woe to them! For they have brought evil on themselves."

Genesis 18:20, 21

“And the LORD said, ‘The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave.’”

“I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know.”

The Lord’s statement recorded in Genesis 18:21 does “not” mean that the Lord needed to confirm what was taking place in Sodom and Gomorrah since He is omniscient. But rather He makes this statement so that He might reveal to Abraham that He is a God of righteousness and justice.

The Lord’s statement recorded in Genesis 18:21 was made to demonstrate to Abraham that He is a righteous and just sovereign over the inhabitants of the earth.

Psalm 11:4-7

“The LORD is in His holy temple; the LORD’S throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men.”

“The LORD tests the righteous and the wicked, and the one who loves violence His soul hates.”

“Upon the wicked He will rain snares; Fire and brimstone and burning wind will be the portion of their cup.”

“For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face.”

The Lord’s statement recorded in Genesis 18:21 is for the sake of Abraham so that Abraham might intercede on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember, Abraham’s nephew Lot is living in Sodom, so at this particular point in the narrative the Lord is withholding judgment of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah until Lot and his family have vacated the city. Therefore, the Lord is withholding judgment for the benefit of Abraham so that he could exercise himself spiritually on behalf of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and the Lord was withholding judgment so that Lot, a believer could escape the destruction unharmed.

The Lord is also withholding judgment temporarily upon Sodom and Gomorrah so that He

might demonstrate His character and nature and that Abraham might demonstrate his as well and Lot might escape the impending judgment.

1 Timothy 2:4, “who (God) desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Genesis 18:23-32 records Abraham’s intercession with the Lord for the inhabitants of Sodom and in particular his nephew Lot and his family.

The intercessory prayer of Abraham that appears in Genesis 18:23-32 was unlike the prayers that we in the church age are to make. Abraham spoke directly face to face with the visible manifestation of the Son of God whereas in the church age we are commanded by the Son of God to pray directly to the Father who is invisible (Jn. 16:26-27; Eph. 3:14).

As we will note, Abraham’s intercession reveals God’s righteous and just character as well as His love for all men in that He desires all men to be saved and that Abraham shares this same attitude with God.

Genesis 18:22, “**Then the men** (elect angels; see Gen. 19:1) **turned away from there** (oaks of Mamre in Hebron, 19 miles southwest of Jerusalem, see Gen. 18:1) **and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD.**”

As Abraham sees the two angels head towards Sodom, he senses that the Lord was sending them to destroy Sodom since it had a reputation for evil. So we see Abraham not heading home but staying in the Lord’s presence and interceding for the inhabitants of Sodom and in particular Lot and his family.

Genesis 18:23, “**Abraham came near and said, ‘Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?’**”

This is the first recorded instance of a man initiating a conversation with the Lord. Abraham was convinced there were righteous people in Sodom since he knows his nephew Lot is a

believer who was living in that city and so without mentioning his name, Abraham is showing concern for his nephew.

The statement that “**Abraham drew near**” describes the act preparatory to prayer since it does not say that he drew near “to” God. Abraham was bold and confident in approaching the Lord in order to intercede for Lot and the citizens of Sodom because he was confident in his relationship with the Lord and was experiencing fellowship with the Lord since he was obedient (cf. 1 Jn. 3:21-22).

Abraham was aware that like us he could approach the Father in prayer with boldness and confidence because of Christ’s death, which propitiated the Father’s holiness, which demanded that our sins be judged (see Eph. 3:12).

Genesis 18:24, “Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?”

Genesis 18:25, “Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

Genesis 18:26, “So the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.’”

“**The righteous**” refers to believers whereas “**the wicked**” refers to unbelievers since the latter is never used in Scripture of believers.

A person becomes “righteous” the moment they exercise faith in Christ as their Savior as Abraham did (Gen. 15:6; Rm. 4). Therefore, the term “**the righteous**” refers to those individuals who like Abraham are in right relationship with the Lord as a result of faith in the Lord whereas the term “**the wicked**” refers to those who are not in right relationship to the Lord as a result of not exercising faith in the Lord. These terms emphasize one’s relationship to the Lord and the conduct, which flows from either having a relationship with the Lord or not.

This question, “**will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?**” on the surface

appears to indicate that Abraham is operating in unbelief by questioning the Lord’s character but it must be taken in context with the rest of the passage.

Genesis 18:25 records Abraham appealing to the Lord’s righteous and just character, which he knew by experience through the Lord’s gracious dealings with him throughout the years (cf. Job 34:10-12). Therefore, Abraham is operating in faith in the character and nature of the Lord and not unbelief and is well aware that the Lord is righteous and just and would not do anything unfair to members of the human race. Of course, the Lord would never place believers under the same judgment as unbelievers.

Abraham’s knowledge of the Lord’s just character serves as the basis for which he approaches the Lord in this intercessory prayer. Therefore, Abraham is “suggesting” that the Lord would not destroy the righteous along with the wicked in order to open up an opportunity to intercede for the citizens of Sodom and in particular his nephew Lot. Abraham is “not” challenging or calling into question the Lord’s character but rather he is asserting his faith in the righteous and just character and nature of the Lord.

Remember, we studied in Genesis 18:19 that “**the way of the Lord**” is described as “**doing righteousness and justice.**”

In Genesis 18:24, Abraham asks if the Lord would spare the unbelievers in Sodom on account of the believers located in that city, which demonstrates his concern not only for his nephew Lot but also for all the people of Sodom.

Now, if you recall in Genesis 14, Abraham delivered his nephew Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah from the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition. He risked his life to save Lot and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah and here we see Abraham pleading with the Lord for them with the same boldness, perseverance and generosity with which he fought for them.

Notice that Abraham’s intercession for the inhabitants of Sodom teaches that God will spare and preserve the wicked for the sake of the righteous meaning believers so that the unbeliever might have every opportunity to be saved.

God spares the righteous when He judges a nation as in the case of Rahab (Josh. 2), Assyria (Jonah 3-4) and Israel (Ezek. 14:12-20).

The Lord answers Abraham's petition in the affirmative since it was according to the will of the Lord to spare the unbeliever for the sake of believers in order that the unbeliever might change their mind about Christ and believe in Him and be saved (compare 1 Jn. 5:14-15).

Abraham was not trying to talk the Lord out of destroying Sodom but instead was seeking clarification from God as to the extent of His mercy and the fact that the Lord agreed to Abraham's petition indicates that the two were having fellowship.

Abraham possessed the same attitude as the Lord towards the citizens of Sodom.

Abraham was bold in making this prayer because he knew God in an experiential sense in that He loves the unbeliever since Abraham himself was once a pagan idolater and the Lord saved him (Josh. 24:2).

Abraham begins at fifty since he inferred that since he knew as many as ten believers in Sodom, namely, Lot and his family then there could possibly be the same number in the other four cities of the plain (Admah, Zeboiim, Gomorrah, Zoar), which were designated for destruction by the Lord. Of course, this was wishful thinking on the part of Abraham since Genesis 19 records that only Lot and his two daughters were saved since they were the only ones to escape the destruction of the cities of the plain.

Genesis 18:27, "And Abraham replied, 'Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.'"

"**Lord**" is the noun *ʾadhon* (/w{da*}), which is a term of respect and denotes Abram's awareness of and acknowledgement of his covenant relationship with the Lord and that the Lord is the sovereign governing authority over the entire human race.

Abraham's statement that "**I am but dust and ashes**" demonstrates his profound deference and humility and awareness that he is insignificant in contrast to the Lord.

Genesis 18:28, "Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.'"

Genesis 18:29, "He spoke to Him yet again and said, 'Suppose forty are found there?' And He said, 'I will not do it on account of the forty.'"

Genesis 18:30, "Then he said, 'Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?' And He said, 'I will not do it if I find thirty there.'"

Genesis 18:31, "And he said, 'Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?' And He said, 'I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.'"

Genesis 18:32, "Then he said, 'Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten are found there?' And He said, 'I will not destroy it on account of the ten.'"

Abraham starts off cautiously by beginning at fifty and dropping the number by five twice with each question. The Lord grants each of Abraham's requests to spare the cities of the plain if there were fifty, forty-five or forty believers in those cities. Then, he becomes bolder by dropping the number from five to ten when asking the next three questions so that he goes from thirty, to twenty and finally stopping at ten. Again, the Lord grants Abraham's requests to spare the cities if thirty, twenty or ten believers were residing in those cities.

Abraham stops at ten since it appears because he knew of possibly ten believers in Sodom, namely, his nephew Lot, his wife, their two sons (Gen. 19:12), their two married daughters and their husbands (Gen. 19:14) and their two unmarried daughters (Gen. 19:8), which is a total of ten. The number ten should have provided the protection of Lot with a margin of safety since it would seem that Lot's family alone was large enough to meet this number. Abraham seemed satisfied, and he thought perhaps, too, others had come to trust in God through Lot's witness but as we noted, Genesis 19 records that only Lot and his two daughters survived the destruction of the valley of the Jordan.

The outstanding lesson of this section is that God desires all men to be saved and will withhold judgment in order that some might be saved.

The other important lesson is that the intercessory prayers of believers when according to the will of God can temporarily spare the unbeliever from judgment in order that they might change their minds about Christ and believe in Him to be saved from eternal condemnation.

The fact that Abraham persists in his intercession demonstrates his great faith, which was based upon his experiential knowledge of the Lord and it also teaches us to persevere in our prayers, which the Lord taught His disciples (Mt. 7:7; Lk. 11:1-13).

Genesis 18:23-32 teaches us the importance and power of intercessory prayer for all men, which is commanded of all believers since God desires all men to be saved and to come to an experiential knowledge of the Truth (fellowship), which is resident in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tm. 2:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16-17).

Abraham's intercession for all of the inhabitants of Sodom manifested that he loved all men as God loves all men and teaches us that if we operate in the love of God, we will intercede in prayer for all men.

If we love the unbeliever, we will pray that God would bring in people and circumstances that would cause the unbeliever to have the humility to give the Gospel a hearing and that they would be "exposed" to the Gospel so that they can make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

Nowhere do the Scriptures sanction or command believers to pray that God would save the unbeliever since God, because He is just and righteous, cannot coerce or make the unbeliever do anything against His will, thus God cannot save the unbeliever unless the unbeliever makes a decision to accept Christ as Savior.

Although God's will is that all men be saved, God cannot force any human being to believe in His Son Jesus Christ against their will, thus people go to the Lake of Fire forever and ever not because God desires it but because they choose to.

The believer receives the capacity to pray for all men, when he accepts by faith Christ's love for him while he was an enemy of God and responds in obedience to Christ's love for him, and which love, the Spirit reveals in the Word of God (see 1 John 4:16, 19).

Abraham was a man who was the beneficiary of God's mercy, which is based upon His love (see Eph. 2:1-9) and thus he seeks to secure mercy for others. Abraham's intercession for Sodom reflected the love that God had for Sodom.

Genesis 18:33, "As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place."

The Lord has accomplished all that He purposed to do by this visit to planet earth: (1) Promise of Isaac's Birth (2) Investigation of Sodom (3) Receive Abraham's intercession for Sodom.

Genesis 19

Genesis 19 is one of the saddest and most disturbing chapters that appear in the Bible. The reason for this assessment is that it presents for us a graphic picture of how low that in unregenerate men, who are living in disobedience to the will of God, can stoop in their conduct.

In Genesis 19:1-11, which we will study this evening, we have the record of a blatant manifestation of the moral and immoral degeneracy that was rampant in Sodom. This manifestation provided confirmation for the two elect angels sent by the Lord on a fact-finding mission that Sodom was indeed wicked and worthy of destruction.

In this passage, we see that Lot has gone from living on the borders of Sodom to living in the place and being politically involved in the city. This indicates that he has sold out to the cosmic system of Satan since the city of Sodom was governed by evil.

In this section of Genesis, we see the depravity of Lot, a believer, which is manifested in that he offers up his engaged virgin daughters to a mob of gay men as bargaining chips in order to, spare the two angels from the mob's desire to rape them!

In Genesis 19:12-29, we have the record of the destruction of the cities of the plain, Sodom,

Admah, Gomorrah and Zeboiim. Also, in this passage we see the disintegration of Lot's family and the deliverance of Lot and two of his daughters from this destruction.

Genesis 19:30-38 records the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters that came about in order to preserve the family line.

Genesis 19:1, "Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground."

Genesis 19:2, "And he said, 'Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.' They said however, 'No, but we shall spend the night in the square.'"

Genesis 19:3, "Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate."

In Genesis 19, we see the end of a downward progression in the life of Lot since Genesis 13:12 records that Lot **"moved his tents as far as Sodom."** Then, we see him **"living in Sodom"** according to Genesis 14:12 and finally we read in Genesis 19:1 that Lot was **"sitting in the gate of Sodom."**

Henry M. Morris commenting Lot's downward spiral, writes, "Here is a man who had participated in one of the highest callings ever given by God to men, one who had been at hand to experience with Abraham marvelous revelations and deliverances from God, and yet who now was right at home in the midst of the life of one of the most wicked cities that ever disgraced the earth" (The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, page 345).

Lot is out of the "geographical" will of God meaning he is not in the geographical location that God has designed for him to be. Lot should have been with Abraham and not in Sodom and because of this, he is in great danger.

We've already seen in Genesis 14 that because Lot was out of the geographical will of God, he was taken as a prisoner in the war between the Eastern

Coalition from Mesopotamia and the Dead Sea Coalition. Lot suffered the consequences for not being in the place that the Lord wanted him to be. Therefore, it is clear that Lot has not learned his lesson.

In fact, he and his wife and family have fallen in love with Sodom since it was very prosperous and beautiful place, the best the devil had to offer humans. Lot stayed in Sodom because he loved the devil's world, which believers are prohibited from doing.

1 John 2:15-17

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

"World" is the noun *kosmos* and is used of a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults and the occult dominated and negatively affected by Satan who is god of this satanic cosmos. This system is promoted by Satan, conformed to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to God the cause of Christ.

This world system is used to seduce men away from God and the person of Christ and is anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible, and very anti-humanity though it often appears as humanitarian as part of Satan's masquerade as an angel of light.

Satan has incorporated into his system of world rulership as many material distractions as possible. Affluence, the increase and spread of wealth, communication and technology are factors, which, from one point of view, are very beneficial to the devil's control of mankind.

We see that Lot is distracted by the pursuit of materialism and wealth because he loves money

and affluence as demonstrated in that he remains in wicked Sodom.

We are not to be friends with this world which amounts to hostility to God and His aims (Jam. 4:4); nor are we to love the world, for loving the world and its things chokes out our ability to love God (1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 6:19-24; Mark 4:18-19).

James 4:4, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

Abraham was a friend of God but Lot was a friend of the devil’s world, selling out to it and compromising with it, thinking erroneously that he could serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Unlike Abraham, Lot found his security, significance and satisfaction in life and contentment in the cosmic system.

Romans 12:2, “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Lot has sold out to the devil’s world, choosing affluence, his business over his relationship with the Lord and God’s people (i.e. Abraham) resulting in the loss of his family, business and possessions!

Genesis 19:1, “Now the two angels came to Sodom in the evening as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground.”

In Genesis 18, these two angels were described from the human perspective as “men” but here in Genesis 19, we have them described from the divine perspective and are thus called “angels.” The writer of Hebrew reflects on these two perspectives.

Hebrews 13:2, “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Bruce K. Waltke makes the following comment regarding Lot sitting in the gate of Sodom, “A city gate was usually made of monumental edifices shading the narrow passageway and side chambers of the city entrance. Here the elders and officials sat on stone benches to adjudicate legal matters and discuss local affairs. The gate was the physical symbol of collective authority and power. Lot’s presence here suggests that politically he has become one of the Sodomites, if not a leader among them. Curiously, Lot is alone at the focal point of communal life, suggesting that he alone is concerned about the community’s interests and well-being. The events that follow substantiate this. Though politically one with them, theologically Lot remains distinct” (Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 275).

We must remember that Lot came to Sodom as a wealthy man. It seems that he had not lost anything in the war between the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition and the Dead Sea Coalition since Abraham recovered all the loot that was taken. This deliverance by his uncle would have given Lot a position of influence in the city. Therefore, Lot’s popularity and power was derived from his relationship to Abraham.

Peter states that Lot was a “**righteous**” man meaning a believer who was oppressed and tormented by the immoral behavior of the Sodomites.

2 Peter 2:4-7

“For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment.”

“and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.”

“and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter.”

“and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men.”

“**Oppressed**” is the verb *kataponeo* (kataponevw), which is in the causative direct middle voice indicating that Lot “caused himself” to be oppressed by the immoral conduct of the Sodomites because he chose to live among them and be politically involved with them. Thus indicating that the suffering of his soul was brought about by his own bad decision to settle in Sodom against the will of God.

2 Peter 2:8, 9

“(for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds).”

“then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.”

Some commentators believe that Lot sat in the gate in order to intercept visitors and protect them from the violence of the mobs. Based upon the conduct we see later in the chapter among the Sodomites, this was more than likely the case.

Genesis 19:2, “And he said, ‘Now behold, my lords, please turn aside into your servant's house, and spend the night, and wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way.’ They said however, ‘No, but we shall spend the night in the square.’”

Although Lot fails miserably in dealing with the situation to follow, his hospitality at least demonstrates his desire to do righteousness and manifested him as a believer in the midst of unbelievers (cf. 2 Pet. 2:6-8). The fact that the angels politely refuse Lot’s hospitality in order to sleep in the city square was not unusual in the ancient world since the climate permitted such a thing.

The angels politely refuse Lot’s hospitality because they have been sent by the Lord on a fact-finding mission to confirm if the inhabitants of Sodom were in fact wicked and worthy of being destroyed.

Genesis 19:3

“Yet he urged them strongly, so they turned aside to him and entered his house; and he prepared a feast for them, and baked unleavened bread, and they ate.”

Notice that Lot is preparing a meal for the angels and not his wife suggesting that she did not share the same hospitable character as her husband, manifesting that she was an unbeliever. Her death recorded later on in the chapter indicates.

It is significant that Lot baked unleavened bread and is the first mention of leaven in the Bible, which many times in the Scripture symbolizes evil doctrine or practice corrupting God’s people.

Although, Lot was tormented by the evil practices of the Sodomites, he still remained in the place possibly thinking he could change them. But more than likely, he remained because he loved the affluence of the place, its beauty, and his position politically. He remained because he was willing to tolerate the evil, thought it bothered him and so he compromised.

Lot should have been evangelizing, which appears, he wasn’t. If he did evangelize then he should have left the place once the Sodomites rejected the gospel message. As a result, his family was totally under the influence of evil in Sodom resulting in their destruction in the end except for two daughters.

Lot has not removed himself in his soul from the wickedness of Sodom because he is in love with the place and his position. Thus, as a result he won’t remove himself geographically from the place.

Genesis 19:4-5 records for us a blatant manifestation of the evil that was rampant in Sodom. This manifestation of evil among the unrepentant Sodomites provided confirmation for the two elect angels sent by the Lord on a fact-finding mission that Sodom was indeed wicked and worthy of destruction.

Genesis 19:4, “Before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both young and old, all the people from every quarter.”

Genesis 19:5, “and they called to Lot and said to him, ‘Where are the men who came to you

tonight? Bring them out to us that we may have relations with them.”

The angels evidently were very attractive to the gay men of the city since both old and young come out from every quarter of the city. The fact that both the old and young were involved in this attempted homosexual gang rape indicates that the lifestyle of homosexuality was promoted and practiced up to the third and fourth generation. This illustrates the principle taught many times in Scripture that God visits the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.

Numbers 14:18, “The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.”

The conduct of the men of Sodom towards the two elect angels sent by the Lord who appeared as men was confirmation for the elect angels that in fact the Sodomites were wicked and justified in being destroyed by the Lord.

The narrator (Moses) gives the reader these sordid details so that the reader can know that God was justified in destroying the Sodomites since they were “all” wicked unregenerate and unrepentant individuals.

Genesis 19:3-5 indicates that the men of Sodom were not only looking to perform homosexual acts upon the angels but they want to do it against their will. Thus we see that collectively the men of Sodom wanted to rape these angels!

This passage clearly indicates that the men of Sodom did not consider homosexuality a sin since they attempt to rape the angels publicly. Both old and young men throughout the city were involved in this heinous crime! Their collective conscience was seared since they had rejected the law of God inherent in their collective conscience, which prohibited such conduct. This was because they had exchanged the truth of God for lies and have been given over by the Lord to their homosexual lusts and would be judged accordingly!

Romans 1:18-32 teaches that homosexuality is “not” biological or something one is born with and can’t control but rather is a choice to not

acknowledge God as Creator and to adhere to His laws.

Romans 1:18-32

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.”

“because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.”

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

“For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.”

“Professing to be wise, they became fools.”

“and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.”

“Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.”

“For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.”

“For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural.”

“and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.”

“And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them

over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper.”

“being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips.”

“slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents.”

“without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful.”

“and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.”

Jude states that God judged the Sodomites because of “**gross immorality**” and for going after “**strange flesh**” referring to committing homosexual acts.

Jude 5-7

“Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe.”

“And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.”

“just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal fire.”

The phrase “**gross immorality**” refers to immoral degeneracy that is defined by the expression “**went after strange flesh.**” The latter indicates that the men of Sodom and Gomorrah pursued sexual relations of a different kind from the norm, and is a reference to homosexuality.

The Scriptures condemned and prohibit homosexual behavior (Lev. 18:22).

Leviticus 20:13, “If there is a man who lies with a male as those who lie with a woman, both of them have committed a detestable act; they shall surely be put to death. Their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

The men of Sodom did “not” conceal their homosexual behavior but were blatantly open about. This explains why the Lord said in Genesis 18:20 that the “**outrage of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great and their sin is exceedingly grave.**” It should make us wonder as Christians living in America in the 21st century what the Lord thinks about the present day promotion of homosexuality in the media as an alternative lifestyle.

The Word of God’s teaching on homosexuality indicates clearly that God is not pleased with the propagation in the media of homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle and He will judge it!

We must remember that God hates the sin of homosexuality but loves the sinner (Jn. 3:16-17). This is manifested in the fact that Jesus Christ died for the homosexual in order that they might be saved and be freed from the bondage of homosexual sins.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Genesis 19:6-11 records for us Lot’s final, futile attempt to compromise with the wicked mob of gay men in Sodom who attempted to gang rape Lot’s two guests. Lot’s two guests were in fact angels sent by the Lord to confirm that Sodom was justified in being destroyed.

Genesis 19:6-7, “**But Lot went out to them at the doorway, and shut the door behind him and said, ‘Please, my brothers, do not act wickedly.’**”

Lot courageously puts himself between the mob and his guests. When Lot uses the term “**brothers**” he is appealing to the shared citizenship that he had with the mob indicating that Lot is attempting to play politics and compromise with the mob.

For twenty years Lot had lived in Sodom, yet he was still an alien to the men of the city. He was

left alone by these men because they still remembered the military might of his uncle Abraham and had he'd been attacked they would have had Abraham to deal with.

Lot rebuke was too much for the mob and they turn on him.

Genesis 19:8, "Now behold, I have two daughters who have not had relations with man; please let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you like; only do nothing to these men, inasmuch as they have come under the shelter of my roof."

Lot demonstrates that he has been influenced by evil in that he is willing to make such a despicable compromise by offering his two virgin daughters to this mob in order to spare his guests! These two virgin daughters of Lot were engaged to be married according to Genesis 19:14.

In Mosaic Law, the violator of a betrothed or engaged woman's sanctity was subject to death by stoning (Deut. 22:23-27). Therefore, by handing over his daughters to this mob of gay men would have implicated Lot in this crime and made him guilty and worthy of death in the eyes of God.

On the other hand, if Lot hands over his guests, who he at this time, believes are merely mortal men, he would be guilty of a crime as well. If Lot hands himself over to the mob, there would be no one to protect his guests or his family. Therefore, Lot is caught between a rock and a hard place from the human perspective. But from the divine perspective, he should have cried out to the Lord in prayer to deliver him from this mob. The Lord would have delivered him since this was one of the reasons why the angels were sent to Sodom.

So we see that Lot attempts to avoid the sin of the mob by committing sin and handing his daughters over to them. This compromise is another manifestation that Lot is under the influence of Satan's cosmic system of evil.

Genesis 19:9, "But they said, 'Stand aside.' Furthermore, they said, 'This one came in as an alien, and already he is acting like a judge; now we will treat you worse than them.' So they pressed hard against Lot and came near to break the door."

The statement, "**This one came in as an alien and already he is acting like a judge**" expresses the contempt that the Sodomites have for Lot and that they never had accepted him as one of their own.

The mob rejects Lot's offer of his virgin daughters and now threaten to rape him and ridicule him for attempting to reach a compromise with them. Lot is now paying the price for compromising with the cosmic system of Satan. His treatment by this mob of unregenerate, cosmic, gay rapists teaches the cosmic system's contempt for a cosmic believer.

Genesis 19:10, "But the men reached out their hands and brought Lot into the house with them, and shut the door."

Genesis 19:11, "They struck the men who were at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they wearied themselves trying to find the doorway."

Lot goes from attempting to rescue his guests to his guests rescuing him! Finally, the angels intervene and stop this mob in its tracks by striking it with blindness. This blindness did not leave its victims sightless but rather was a blindness of confusion so that they could not identify where they were. Consequently, they were unable to find the door to Lot's home and open it.

Now, Lot knows that his guests are not of this world but are in fact angels sent by the Lord to destroy Sodom and deliver him and his family. This supernatural act was to exact some sort of repentance in the mob so that the Lord wouldn't have to judge them. But it doesn't and so right to the very end, the Lord was attempting to save them but they refused these attempts to bring them to their senses.

Genesis 9:4-11 records several crimes committed by the Sodomites: (1) Violation of guests (2) Violation of personal property and privacy (3) Homosexual conduct (4) Attempted rape. (5) Attempted assault and battery.

In Genesis 9:1-11, the Sodomites are guilty of presumably the worst sexual offense, namely, attempted homosexual gang rape (cf. Judges 19; Jude 7).

The Bible also records other sins committed by both Sodom and Gomorrah such as social

oppression (Isa. 1:10, 17), adultery, lying and abetting criminals (Jer. 23:14), arrogance, complacency and showing no pity on the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49). Therefore, the conduct of the Sodomites and their unrepentant attitude towards their Creator Jesus Christ confirmed to the angels that the Lord would be justified in destroying them and this He did!

Many times the Lord gave the Sodomites opportunities to change their wicked ways and believe in Him so as to be saved from eternal condemnation but yet they refused many times. One of these attempts was when the Lord gave Abraham a great military victory over the Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings who had defeated the Dead Sea Kings and carried away the inhabitants of Sodom as prisoners of war including Lot. Their deliverance and Lot's was clearly Divine Intervention since Abraham was completely out numbered and yet he defeated the Eastern Coalition with just 318 men and the small armies of the three Amorite princes. You would have thought that this great deliverance would have humbled the Sodomites and yet it had not but the Lord continued to be patient with them and withheld judgment so that they might be saved.

Genesis 19:12-22 records the deliverance of Lot from the destruction of Sodom.

Genesis 19:12, "Then the two men said to Lot, 'Whom else have you here? A son-in-law, and your sons, and your daughters, and whomever you have in the city, bring them out of the place.'"

Notice that the Lord is concerned about the salvation of Lot's entire family, even his son-in-law. The Lord's generosity is demonstrated in that Lot could bring anyone with him that he wanted to. They would be protected because of their relationship with the Lot who was a believer even though they were unbelievers. They did not have to be righteous in order to be delivered from the judgment since it was enough that they were connected with Lot.

Genesis 19:13, "for we are about to destroy this place, because their outcry has become so great before the LORD that the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

The angels were the agents used by the Lord to not only deliver Lot and those related to him but they were also to carry out the destruction of Sodom.

Psalms 78:49, "He sent upon them His burning anger, fury and indignation and trouble, a band of destroying angels."

"**Their outcry**" refers to social oppression in Sodom (Isa. 1:10, 17), as well as adultery, lying and abetting criminals (Jer. 23:14), arrogance, complacency and showing no pity on the poor and needy (Ezek. 16:49).

Isaiah 3:8-9 records that the Sodomites did not conceal their homosexual behavior but flaunted it. Genesis 9:4-11 records that the Sodomites were in violation of guests, and of personal property and privacy, homosexual conduct, gang rape, assault and battery.

In Genesis 9:4-11, the Sodomites are guilty of presumably the worst sexual offense, namely, attempted homosexual gang rape (cf. Judges 19; Jude 7). Therefore, the conduct of the Sodomites and their unrepentant attitude towards their Creator Jesus Christ confirmed to the angels that the Lord would be justified in destroying them and this He did!

The wickedness of the Sodomites has been confirmed by two credible witnesses as required by divine jurisprudence as recorded in the Mosaic Law, namely, the two elect angels (Deut. 17:6). The angels have confirmed that the inhabitants of Sodom are indeed wicked and unrepentant and have therefore been ordered by the Lord to destroy the place.

Genesis 19:14, "Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were to marry his daughters, and said, 'Up, get out of this place, for the LORD will destroy the city.' But he appeared to his sons-in-law to be jesting."

In those twilight hours before sunrise, Sodom saw more evangelistic activity from Lot than in all the previous years. His efforts were not trained upon the men of the city, however, but were a frantic and futile effort to save his own family, whom he had neglected to win.

Lot's daughters were engaged and were therefore under the authority of their future husbands. In the

days of Lot and Abraham, marriages were arranged by parents for business purposes or social advantage. Therefore, we can infer that Lot had arranged a marriage for his daughters with unbelievers in order to further his business ventures in Sodom and to advance himself socially in the place. This indicates his love for Sodom and therefore, his love for the cosmic system of Satan, which explains his delay and hesitation in leaving Sodom.

“**Joking**” is the verb *tsachaq* (צַחַק) (tsaw-khak), which in the piel stem means, “to mock,” thus indicating that Lot’s future sons-in-law mocked and did not take his warning seriously. They did not respect Lot or his relationship with the Lord because he had sold out to the cosmic system. They did not take him seriously because he had never mentioned his relationship with the Lord before since it wasn’t that important to him.

His top priority in life was never his relationship with the Lord but rather his business ventures and politic ambitions in Sodom. Lot’s words were not a repetition of his life-long warnings of sin and judgment but were something totally new and novel.

His future sons-in-law could see that Lot’s priorities were not his relationship with the Lord but rather his priorities were acquiring wealth, his business and politics as evidence in the fact that Genesis 19:1 records him sitting in the gate of Sodom.

His compromise with Satan’s cosmic system had destroyed his witness in the city meaning that he was a poor representative and ambassador of Jesus Christ.

Christians are ambassadors for Christ and are commanded to keep their behavior excellent before the unbeliever in order to win the unbeliever to Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

1 Peter 2:12, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may

because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Lot’s sons-in-law were unbelievers indicating that Lot had violated a spiritual principle taught in the Word of God that no believer was to marry an unbeliever. This too was evidence of Lot’s apostasy or reversionism and sell out to the cosmic system of Satan.

2 Corinthians 6:14, 15

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

“Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?”

“Reversionism” is the act of reverting to a former state, habit, belief or practice of post-salvation sinning (2 Tim. 4:4) and is a reversal of your priorities, attitudes, affections, the object of your personal love (Gal. 4:9).

Reversionism and evil are actually two sides of the same coin in that evil is what the reversionistic soul thinks whereas reversionism is the condition of that soul.

Notice that Lot does not go to warn his own sons. Remember in Genesis 19:12, the angels told Lot to warn his son-in-law, his sons and daughters but here in Genesis 19:14 we see him warning only his future sons-in-law who were engaged to his daughters. This indicates that his sons were deeply involved in the Sodomite wickedness by this time and knew that it would be useless to even bother warning them.

As you can see, Lot’s compromise with the evil of Satan’s cosmic system has caused the disintegration and destruction of his family.

Genesis 19:15, “When morning dawned, the angels urged Lot, saying, ‘Up, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away in the punishment of the city.’”

Morning came and no one had gotten saved. In Genesis 19:12, the angels are described as “**men**” since from Lot’s perspective they appeared to be

simply men but in Genesis 19:15 they are called “angels” since by this time in the narrative Lot recognizes that his guests are not of this world but in fact, angels in human form.

Genesis 19:16, “But he hesitated. So the men seized his hand and the hand of his wife and the hands of his two daughters, for the compassion of the LORD was upon him; and they brought him out, and put him outside the city.”

The fact that Lot hesitated in leaving Sodom was evidence that he was in love with Sodom, which was totally driven by evil and a part of Satan’s cosmic system.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this, writes, “Lot felt more secure inside an evil city than outside of it with God” (Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 278).

The fact that the angels had to take the hands of Lot, his wife and two daughters was indication that all of them were in disobedience to the Lord who had sent these angels to remove them. Therefore, the fact that they were brought out by the angels was according to God’s grace and mercy meaning that they didn’t earn or deserve this treatment from the Lord.

Lot’s wife and two daughters leave the city with Lot and the two angels because they knew Lot’s guests were able to carry out the destruction. The Lord is manifesting His compassion to Lot by forcibly removing him from Sodom.

Psalms 103:8, “The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.”

Genesis 19:17, “When they had brought them outside, one said, ‘Escape for your life! Do not look behind you, and do not stay anywhere in the valley; escape to the mountains, or you will be swept away.’”

The angels stress to Lot and his family the urgency of leaving without any delay, even without looking behind them in order to escape the destruction of the cities of the plain. The lesson for us believers is that we are to flee from the cosmic system of Satan without looking back with regrets or longing in order to avoid being injured or destroyed when the cosmic system is judged.

Genesis 19:18, “But Lot said to them, ‘Oh no, my lords!’”

Genesis 19:19, ‘Now behold, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have magnified your lovingkindness, which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, for the disaster will overtake me and I will die.’”

Again, we see Lot attempting to compromise. Lot does “not” recognize or acknowledge that these angels were the agents used by the Lord to deliver him since he attributes his deliverance to the angels and not the Lord who sent the angels. This is another manifestation that he is in apostasy or reversionism as a result of honoring the temptations of the cosmic system of Satan.

When the angels tell Lot to flee for his life, he thinks he will not be able to make it to the mountains since he must have been an old man. If Abraham was ninety-nine, Lot must have been at least in his seventies, maybe in his eighties and so he figures that he will not have the stamina to run that far and that long. So he drives a hard bargain to go to the city of Zoar and his request is granted.

The presence of Lot at that place guarantees the safety of the city. Lot’s fear demonstrates the irrationality of unbelief. The irrationality of Lot’s unbelief is manifested in that he does not trust that the Lord would protect him in the place that He told Lot to flee to. You would think that Lot would consider the fact that if the Lord spared him from being killed in Sodom, the Lord could and would protect him in the place that He told Lot to flee. The Lord sent these angels to rescue Lot and his family and yet Lot still fears he will not be protected indicating he does not believe that the Lord will deliver or protect him.

Genesis 19:20, “now behold, this town is near enough to flee to, and it is small. Please, let me escape there (is it not small?) that my life may be saved.”

Lot’s request to flee to a town rather than escape to the mountains is evidence that he cannot face life apart from living in a city.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this verse, writes, “Lot is pleading that God spare Bela (see 14:2), one of the cities of the plain otherwise under

God's judgment (19:25). He argues that, since the walled village is small, its quantity of sin is less and/or it is not worth bothering with. His argument betrays a lack of faith, a jaded spiritual evaluation of justice, and an effete taste for depraved urbanity (see note on 19:18). His selfish plea that God spare Zoar as a place for him to live without regard to righteousness functions as a foil to Abraham's plea for Sodom on the basis of God's compassion and righteousness" (Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 278).

The Lord's intention was to deliver Lot and He would have therefore, suspended the destruction of Sodom until Lot was safely in the mountains.

Genesis 19:21, "He said to him, 'Behold, I grant you this request also, not to overthrow the town of which you have spoken.'"

Genesis 19:22, "Hurry, escape there, for I cannot do anything until you arrive there. Therefore the name of the town was called Zoar."

Lot did "not" request that the angels not destroy the city of Zoar for the sake of its inhabitants but for his own selfish interests and convenience and more evidence that he was in reversionism or apostasy.

Genesis 19:23-26 records the account of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the other cities of the plain. This passage teaches that although, the Lord is long-suffering, He is not everlasting suffering meaning that there is an end to His patience in regards to the unbeliever.

The Lord is patient and slow to execute judgment upon the unbeliever because His will is that all men be saved as manifested by the fact that Christ died for all men (Jn. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 3:9; 1 Tim. 2:4; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tim. 4:10).

Genesis 19:23

"The sun had risen over the earth when Lot came to Zoar."

Genesis 19:24

"Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven."

Genesis 19:25

"and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground."

A comparison of Genesis 19:15-22 and Genesis 19:23-24 indicates that it took Lot all day and all night and the following morning to arrive in Zoar.

Genesis 19:15-22 indicates that the morning after the attempted gang rape by the Sodomites, the angels commanded Lot to leave the city of Sodom immediately and flee to the mountains. Lot pleaded with the angels to let him stay in Zoar rather than heading into the mountains and they obliged him and so all of this took place in the morning.

So Lot sets out for Zoar sometime in the morning and arrives the following day approximately at midday since according to Genesis 19:23, "**the sun had risen over the earth**" and was not just coming up. Therefore, around midday, with Lot safely out of Sodom, the Lord executed judgment upon the cities of plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, and Admah.

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+) emphasizes the "immanency" of God meaning that God Himself intervenes in the affairs of Sodom and Gomorrah by executing judgment upon them for their unrepentant, wicked attitude and resultant conduct.

"**Rained**" is the verb *matar* (rf^m*) (maw-tar), which is in the hiphil (causative) stem indicating that the Lord as the subject "caused" burning sulfur "to rain" down upon the cities of the plain; therefore, the destruction was supernatural and not a natural disaster. The hiphil (causative) stem indicates that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was directly from the Lord, which rules out an earthquake or electrical storm, or a combination of both as the cause of the destruction.

Some have suggested that these cities were destroyed by a volcanic eruption, but there is no evidence of any volcanic activity in the area and the Bible does not mention a volcano as the cause or the instrument used by the Lord to destroy the cities. It is also been suggested that lightning ignited the natural gases of the Jordan valley released by an earthquake but there is no biblical

support for this either. It is clear that the passage is a literal reference to an act of God's judgment, in which He caused burning sulfur from heaven to rain down upon the cities of the plain in order to destroy them. The two elect angels that removed Lot from Sodom revealed that they were the agents used by the Lord to execute this judgment.

"Brimstone" is the noun *gapharith* (jyr!p+G*) (gof-reeth), which means, "sulfur" but is used of any inflammable substance since the word comes from the noun *gopher*, which would refer to pitch and then later came to represent other combustibles such as sulfur.

"Fire" is the noun *`esh* (va@) (aysh), which appears here in the Bible for the first time and is of course associated with divine judgment and was a supernatural fire sent down from heaven by the Lord.

Hebrews 12:29, "for our God is a consuming fire."

The Hebrew expression *gaph^erith wa'esh* (tyr!p+G*Va@w*) translated **"brimstone and fire"** by the New American Standard contains the figure of "hendiadys," which takes place when two nouns are used to express one idea or concept.

The figure of "hendiadys" indicates that the noun *`esh*, intensifies the meaning of the noun *gaph^erith* and changes it to an adjective of the superlative degree and so the expression *gaph^erith wa'esh* should be translated, "burning sulfur."

To this day, the Dead Sea area reeks of sulphurous fumes and asphalt deposits are found.

"Sodom" and **"Gomorraah"** are on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians "the cities of the plain."

"Sodom" and **"Gomorraah"** are the only cities of the plain mentioned here because they were the chief or largest among the cities.

Genesis 19:25, "and He overthrew those cities, and all the valley, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground."

"Overthrew" is the verb *haphakh* (lp^h*) (haw-vak), which is used in reference to the overthrow of the cities that were once standing and denotes the idea of the evil, unrepentant, arrogant men and institutions that have been brought low by the Lord.

A comparison of Genesis 13:10, 14:8, Deuteronomy 29:23 and Hosea 11:8 indicate that **"the cities of the (Jordan) valley"** that the Lord destroyed were **"Admah," "Zeboiim," "Sodom," "Gomorraah"** and **"Zoar,"** which was spared.

"The valley" refers to the "valley of the Jordan" according to a comparison with Genesis 13:10 and was a tropical area between Jericho and Zoar, 800 to 1200 feet below sea level, where crops could grow all year-round. Today, the valley of the Jordan is no longer a green, well-watered land because of the Lord's judgment upon brought a drastic change to the entire area.

According to Genesis 13:10, prior to the destruction of the cities of the plain, the Jordan valley was "like the garden of the Lord" and "like the land of Egypt."

Henry M. Morris commenting on the geography of the Dead Sea region, which the Lord destroyed, writes, "The Dead Sea is the lowest spot on the earth's surface since it is 1,286 feet below sea level. The Jordan River empties into it and it has no outlet. The intense heat evaporates great quantities of water, so that the salinity of the sea continues to increase. It is about 40 miles long by 10 miles wide and is divided into two parts, which are connected by a narrow strait. The southern segment, about 10 miles long, is only about 10 to 20 feet deep, whereas the northern segment is very deep, up to 1,040 feet in places" (The Genesis Record, page 352, Baker Book House).

It was the southern segment that was the fertile plain that is described in Genesis 13:10 that was so attractive to Lot. It has since been submerged in water because of the silting up of the bed of the sea in the northern segment, causing the water level to rise.

Genesis 14:3, 8 and 10 calls this region the **"valley of Siddim"** and archaeological explorations have shown that there were five large cities on the eastern side of this southern portion of the Dead

Sea and in many respects, answer the descriptions of the five cities of the plain.

If these are the cities in the days of Lot, then Sodom was the southernmost, and then heading northward, there was Gomorrah, followed by Zoar, Admah and Zeboiim.

There were fresh water streams coming down from the eastern hills into the “**valley of Siddim**” and on into the sea.

The “**valley of Siddim**” was at the southern end of the Dead Sea since Genesis 14:3 relates it to the Salt Sea, insinuating their proximity to each other or even that the Dead Sea was once the valley of Siddim.

Henry M. Morris, writes, “The heat and fertile soil, combined with reliable irrigation, made the whole region one of tremendous agricultural productivity. It was this that so attracted Lot that he chose to live there instead of on the western uplands with Abraham” (The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, page 352).

The Dead Sea is called the Salt Sea because its average 32 percent saline content is about ten times more than the 3 percent average of the oceans.

There was a fresh water stream along each one of these cities. These cities were very prosperous and had large populations.

Morris states that “the tombs that have been uncovered indicate probably over a million individuals had been buried in them” (The Genesis Record, page 352, Baker Book House).

Genesis 19:25 records that the Lord destroyed “**all the inhabitants of the cities** (Sodom, Gomorrah, Zeboiim, and Admah)” but we must remember that it was the Lord’s desire to save all the inhabitants of these cities since He desires none to perish but to be saved. Yet, the inhabitants of these cities were unrepentant meaning that they would not “change their attitudes” and trust in the God of Abraham as their Savior and Sovereign.

Furthermore, as we noted in our study of Abraham’s intercession for the cities of the plain, the Lord would have spared the wicked Sodomites for the sake of the righteous meaning believers so that the unbelievers in Sodom might have every

opportunity to be saved. Yet, none of the Sodomites were spared because of the poor witness of Lot.

Although, Abraham’s intercession for the wicked Sodomites was answered and the Lord would have spared the wicked Sodomites for the sake of Lot who was a believer, the Sodomites themselves had determined for themselves their fate by rejecting the Lord as their Savior-Sovereign.

Genesis 19:25 records that not only were all the inhabitants of the cities of the plain destroyed but also each and every thing that grew on the ground so that no vegetation could grow. This fact reveals a spiritual principle that we noted in our study of the fall of Adam recorded in Genesis 3:17-19 that the land is cursed by association with its inhabitants. Israel was taught this principle by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah 24:5, 6

“The earth is also polluted by its inhabitants, for they transgressed laws, violated statutes, broke the everlasting covenant.”

“Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and those who live in it are held guilty. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left.”

Genesis 19:26, “But his wife, from behind him, looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.”

Lot’s wife disobeys the divine prohibition of the angel to not look back at Sodom, thus manifesting she is an unbeliever. Her disobedience to the divine instruction resulted in her forfeiting the salvation that the Lord offered to her.

In looking back at Sodom, which is a type of the cosmic system of Satan, Lot’s wife identified herself with Sodom. Lot’s wife demonstrated her lack of faith in the Lord as demonstrated by her disobedience to the prohibition to not look back at Sodom. The death of Lot’s wife due to her disobedience to the divine prohibition to not look back at Sodom is a warning and a picture of what happens to those who have their love and affection upon the world, the cosmic system of Satan. It is also teaches a lesson that the Lord taught His disciples in Luke 17:32-33:

Luke 17:32, 33

“Remember Lot's wife.”

“Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

The implication is that Lot's wife was seeking to hang on to her life in Sodom and that, consequently, she lost her life in its destruction. The unbeliever who clings to the cosmic system and rejects Christ as Savior will burn in the Lake of Fire forever according to Revelation 20:11-15. Whereas, the believer who loves the cosmic system will lose rewards at the Bema Seat Evaluation and will be saved as yet through fire according to 1 Corinthians 3:11-15.

“**Looked back**” is the verb *navat* (נָבַט), which is in the hiphil stem means, “to look at intently” thus expressing that Lot's wife had her affections set upon Sodom, which led to her disobedience to the divine prohibition, which led to her destruction.

As she looked back intently at Sodom, she thought about her beautiful home, preparing for the wedding of her daughters and her friends and thus all of these things were more important than obeying the Lord.

Genesis 19:26 records that Lot's wife became a “**pillar of salt**” meaning that she was encrusted with salt, as she was also enveloped with the burning sulfur so that nothing but a pillar of salt remained. It is interesting that today in the Dead Sea region there are many pillars of salt. A number of these have from time to time been called “Lot's wife” by the Arabs.

Josephus claims to have seen the pillar of salt, which was once Lot's wife (Antiquities, book one, chapter eleven).

Bruce K. Waltke, “In the biblical world, a site was strewn with salt to condemn it to perpetual barrenness and desolation (e.g., Deut. 29:23; Judg. 9:45; Ps. 107:34; Jer. 17:6) (Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 279).

The historicity of this event is emphasized throughout Scripture (Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; 49:18; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11; Lk. 17:28-29; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7).

The Lord Jesus Christ confirms its historicity in Luke 17 comparing the attitude of people prior to the sudden destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah to the attitude of the human race prior to His Second Advent.

Luke 17:26-33

“And just as it happened in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man.”

“they were eating, they were drinking, they were marrying, they were being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all.”

“It was the same as happened in the days of Lot: they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building.”

“but on the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all.”

“It will be just the same on the day that the Son of Man is revealed.”

“On that day, the one who is on the housetop and whose goods are in the house must not go down to take them out; and likewise the one who is in the field must not turn back.”

“Remember Lot's wife.”

“Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it.”

Genesis 19:27-29 records that Abraham received his request from the Lord, in his intercessory prayer recorded in Genesis 18:23-32. As a result the Lord delivered his nephew Lot from the destruction of Sodom, thus, revealing the power of the believer's intercessory prayers. Let's pick it up in Genesis 18:22 and read the account of Abraham's intercessory prayer.

The intercessory prayer of Abraham that appears in Genesis 18:23-32 was unlike the prayers that we in the church age are to make. Abraham spoke directly face to face with the visible manifestation of the Son of God whereas in the church age we are commanded by the Son of God to pray directly

to the Father who is invisible (Jn. 16:26-27; Eph. 3:14).

Genesis 18:22-33

“Then the men (elect angels; see Gen. 19:1) turned away from there (oaks of Mamre in Hebron, 19 miles southwest of Jerusalem, see Gen. 18:1) and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD.”

“Abraham came near and said, ‘Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?’”

“Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; will You indeed sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous who are in it?”

“Far be it from You to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous and the wicked are treated alike. Far be it from You! Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?”

“So the LORD said, ‘If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare the whole place on their account.’”

“And Abraham replied, ‘Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord, although I am but dust and ashes.’”

“Suppose the fifty righteous are lacking five, will You destroy the whole city because of five? And He said, ‘I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.’”

“He spoke to Him yet again and said, ‘Suppose forty are found there?’ And He said, ‘I will not do it on account of the forty.’”

“Then he said, ‘Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak; suppose thirty are found there?’ And He said, ‘I will not do it if I find thirty there.’”

“And he said, ‘Now behold, I have ventured to speak to the Lord; suppose twenty are found there?’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy it on account of the twenty.’”

“Then he said, ‘Oh may the Lord not be angry, and I shall speak only this once; suppose ten

are found there?’ And He said, ‘I will not destroy it on account of the ten.’”

“As soon as He had finished speaking to Abraham the LORD departed, and Abraham returned to his place.”

Genesis 19:27, “Now Abraham arose early in the morning and went to the place where he had stood before the LORD (not far from the oaks of Mamre in Hebron).”

Genesis 19:28, “and he looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the valley, and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land ascended like the smoke of a furnace.”

“**Looked down**” is the verb *shaqaph* ([q^v*] (shaw-kaf), which means, “to look down over a valley from a steep angle” and Genesis 18:1 records this high elevation as being the “**oaks of Mamre,**” located in Hebron, nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, and was 3,040 feet above sea level.

“**Sodom**” and “**Gomorrah**” are on the east at the south end of the Dead Sea and helped to form a confederation of cities, which included Admah, Zeboiim and Zoar according to Genesis 14:2, 8 and are called by theologians “the cities of the plain.”

The entire Dead Sea region in the Jordan valley was filled with smoke as a result of the Lord raining down upon it burning sulfur.

Genesis 19:29, “Thus it came about, when God destroyed the cities of the valley, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot lived.”

When the Bible says, “**God remembered Abraham**” it does “not” mean that He had forgotten Abraham but rather it signifies that God acted upon Abraham’s intercessory prayer request and delivered Lot from the destruction of Sodom.

Lot was a disobedient and unfaithful, cosmic believer who was under divine discipline as a result whereas, Abraham was an obedient and faithful believer. Therefore, Genesis 19:29 teaches that the intercessory prayer of a faithful and

obedient believer can deliver a disobedient and unfaithful cosmic believer from death.

The confession of sin to the Father is essential for our prayers to be heard since the Father will not hear our prayers if we are harboring any known sin in our stream of consciousness.

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

All prayer in the church age must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Eph. 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Matthew 6:9, "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.'"

Prayer must be made in the name of Jesus Christ because it is through His merits and our eternal union with Him that gives us the privilege to boldly approach the throne of God in prayer (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit meaning guided by the Word of God, which is inspired by the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Jude 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying by means of the power of the Holy Spirit."

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Believers are commanded to offer up intercessory prayers for all men since God desires all men to be saved and sent His Son to die for all men without

exception and without distinction (1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tm. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16-17).

1 Timothy 2:1, "First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men."

When praying for unbelievers, we should pray that God would bring in people and circumstances that would cause the unbeliever to have the humility to give the Gospel a hearing and that they would be "exposed" to the Gospel so that they can make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

Nowhere do the Scriptures sanction or command believers to pray that God would save the unbeliever since God, because He is just and righteous, cannot coerce or make the unbeliever do anything against his will, thus God cannot save the unbeliever unless the unbeliever makes a decision to accept Christ as Savior.

Although God's will is that all men be saved, God cannot force any human being to believe in His Son Jesus Christ against their will, thus people go to the Lake of Fire forever and ever and not because God desires it.

Intercessory prayer can be: (1) Specific (2) General.

A "specific" intercessory prayer is when we pray and know the specific needs (illnesses, personal problems, adverse situations, etc.) of those people we are personally involved with and know face to face.

Examples of Specific Prayers: (1) Elisha prayed to God for his servant to see the angelic armies protecting him and Elisha (2 Kings 6:17) (2) Apostolic church praying for Peter's deliverance from prison (Acts 12).

A "general" intercessory prayer is when we pray not knowing the specific needs of those people that we are interceding for and do not know personally or face to face.

Philemon 4, "I thank my God always, making mention of you in my prayers."

When praying for all believers, and ourselves we should pray for our growth in God's love

and enlightenment regarding our eternal union with Christ and the Father's will.

Philippians 1:9, "Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge."

Ephesians 1:16-19

"I never cease making it a habit giving thanks on account of all of you. I make it habit to make mention of all of you during my prayers."

"In order that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give to all of you a spiritual wisdom, yes, and revelation too (from God the Holy Spirit) by means of an experiential knowledge of Him (the Father)."

"I make it a habit to pray that the eyes of our heart would receive enlightenment for the purpose of knowing for certain what is the confidence of His calling and what are the glorious riches, which is His inheritance distributed among the saints."

"And what is the surpassing greatness of His divine omnipotence directed towards all of us who are believers. This is in accordance with the operative power, namely, the possession of power to overcome (the sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system) originating from His manifested power (through the resurrection and session of Christ)."

Colossians 1:9, 10

"For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."

"so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

In conclusion, the intercessory prayer of Abraham delivered his nephew Lot from the destruction of the cities of the plain and demonstrates the power of intercessory prayer and challenges us to

practice it every day because it makes a difference in the lives of believers.

Genesis 19:30-38 records Lot's two daughters getting him drunk and having sex with him in order to preserve the family line and thus committing incest. Two sons were born as a result of the incestuous union between Lot and his daughters, namely, Moab and Ammon, whose descendants later on became the enemies of Israel (1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Kings 3:5; 2 Chron. 20:1, 22) and yet from this lineage came Ruth, and so Jesus Christ (see Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:5).

Genesis 19:30, "Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters."

What a difference a day makes. Just the day before, Lot was a man with position and power and possessions and great wealth living in the penthouse in Sodom. But now we see him living in a cave and having lost everything in the destruction of the cities of the plain. Lot has gone from being a city councilman to a caveman! Notice that Lot leaves Zoar and stayed in a cave in the mountains because he was afraid that Zoar would be destroyed as well. But in Genesis 19:21, the Lord gave permission to the angels to spare the city of Zoar so that Lot could stay there.

The fact that he leaves Zoar in fear that the Lord would destroy the place demonstrates his lack of faith in the Lord meaning he did not take the Lord at His Word that He would not destroy Zoar. This is another manifestation that Lot is out of fellowship and under divine discipline because he would not operate in faith. Lot is a "double-minded" believer because of his lack of faith.

James 1:6-7

"But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind."

"For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord."

"being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Now, you will notice that throughout Genesis 19:30-38, the names of Lot's daughters are never given since Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is indirectly censuring them.

Genesis 19:31, "Then the firstborn said to the younger, 'our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth.'"

Genesis 19:32, "Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father."

Family and preservation of the family line was important in ancient times. Lot and his two daughters settled in an area that was largely uninhabited. Now, since Lot was old and now poor because he lost all his possessions in the destruction of Sodom, Lot neither had the inclination nor the opportunity to make arrangements for his daughters to be married.

Now, this scheme by the oldest daughter of Lot to commit incest to carry out their family line seems shocking to us in the 21st century but in those days, it happened all the time and was not yet prohibited by God! As we have noted in our previous studies in the book of Genesis, since God created only one man and one woman, it was essential for brothers to marry sisters in order to continue the human race.

In the first generations, all marriages were brother and sister marriages and there were no mutant genes in the genetic systems of any of these children so that no genetic harm could have resulted from close marriages.

Many, many generations later, during the time of Moses, such mutations had accumulated to the point where such unions were genetically dangerous so that incest was thenceforth prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:9). Since earth's population was still relatively young in the days of Lot, there was as yet no genetic danger from inbreeding. After many further centuries had elapsed, however, the accumulation of mutations and the associated danger of congenital defects had become sufficiently serious to cause God to declare incestuous marriages illegal (Lev. 18:6-14).

Now, since there were no prohibitions in writing from God regarding incest does not mean that God agreed with this incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters. The great sin of the daughters was their lack of faith in waiting on God to provide husbands for them. The fact that the daughters attempted to do things independently of the Lord and the way heathen society did things was a manifestation of the fact that they were totally and completely influenced by the evil of Satan's cosmic system, which was so rampant in Sodom and in the life of their father. Therefore, it should not surprise the reader that the older daughter suggested incest to her younger sister in order to preserve the family line.

They also knew that Lot would never consent to this and so they concocted a scheme to get him drunk in the hopes of getting to forget and lower his moral standards. We can infer that Lot who did not trust the Lord, was discouraged and depressed since everything that he owned was gone and his wife and sons were killed in the destruction of the cities of the plain. Therefore, his daughters suggested the drinking of alcohol to ease his pain and suffering.

Also, we must remember that while in Sodom, Lot's daughters were virgins and were engaged so they must have retained the standard of morality of their father and his love for the cosmic system. The character of Lot's daughters and their solution to their problem simply reflected their father and his way of dealing with his problems.

From Lot, his two daughters learned that morality must sometimes be sacrificed to practicality. Lot was willing to turn over his own daughters (who were as yet sexually pure, not corrupted by the sins of Sodom) to the Sodomites instead of two strangers. They learned from Lot that morality must sometimes be set-aside in emergencies.

Once they saw their father's plight (and their own) as an emergency, incest was no longer a moral problem, for morality must yield to practicality in emergencies according to them.

Many Christian fathers are greatly concerned about the world in which their children live. The temptations are infinitely greater today for children than let's say twenty years ago. But in our concern for what is happening in the cities, let us

not think we can save our children by restricting them to a cave since in the cave, they are still being influenced by us.

Let us be mindful from the tragedy, which occurred in Lot's family that many of the sins of our children are not learned from the world, but from the fathers. They had kept themselves pure for their husbands but now suddenly with the destruction of Sodom, it seemed to them that they would never have husbands and children at all. The latter of which would have caused them to be ridiculed.

So we see them not having faith in the Lord to provide them husbands and walking by faith in the Lord was not something that they were accustomed to doing. Therefore, they chose to solve their problem of not being married independently of the Lord and chose incest with their father.

The statement by the oldest daughter of Lot, "**there is not a man on earth**" indicates that there was a complete and total destruction of the cities of the plain so that there was no male in the area for her and her sister to procreate with.

The expression "**come in to us after the manner of the earth**" is a reference to marriage and implies sexual intercourse. This statement by the oldest daughter of Lot demonstrates the impatience of unbelief and not waiting on the Lord to provide her and her sister a husband.

The oldest daughter is desperate to get married and therefore fails to wait on the Lord to provide her with a husband.

Psalms 27:14, "Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD."

The statement by Lot's oldest daughter, "**let us lie with him** (Lot)" is a euphemism for sexual intercourse and her stated purpose is to preserve the family line through their father.

Genesis 19:33, "So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose."

So Lot's two daughters get him so drunk that he wasn't even aware that his oldest daughter had sex

with him and got up later. Therefore, we see Lot's sin is drunkenness. He was drowning his sorrows in alcohol and was feeling bitter and sorry for himself because he lost everything in the destruction of Sodom.

His daughters fed his self-pity by giving him more and more to drink so that eventually he has sex with his daughters, which he would not have done while sober. This reveals a principle that drunkenness destroys the norms and standards that reside in that part of the soul called the "conscience."

The believer's norms and standards are to be formed in accordance with teaching of the Word of God. Lot has gotten so drunk that he doesn't have his norms and standards circulating in his soul to prevent him from having sex with his daughters because the alcohol is controlling him and not the Word of God.

A number of passages warn against the dangers of drunkenness. Drunkenness causes people to stagger (Ps. 107:27; Prov. 23:34), it makes them sick (Is. 28:8; Jer. 25:27), it makes the eyes red (Prov. 23:29), it puts a person into a stupor (Jer. 51:39, 57), it makes a person poor (Prov. 23:21), it interferes with a leader's work (Prov. 31:4f).

The foolishness of drunkenness is shown by the examples of Noah (Gen. 9:21), Lot (Gen. 19:31-38), Nabal (1 Sam. 25:36-39), David (2 Sam. 11:13), Absalom (2 Sam. 13:28) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:2).

The Bible does "not" prohibit drinking alcohol but it "does" prohibit drunkenness.

Ephesians 5:18, "And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit."

Believers are not to associate with believers who are drunks (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Drunkenness is a manifestation of the old Adamic sin nature (Gal. 5:19-21).

Genesis 19:33, "So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose."

Now, notice that Lot is not so drunk so that he can't perform sexually.

Genesis 19:34, "On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, 'Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father.'"

Genesis 19:35

"So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose."

Once again, it appears that Lot falls for the scheme of the daughters and this time has sex with the younger of the two daughters but more than likely, he had himself a good time the night before and decided to give it a go again. Thus, revealing the principle that you can take Lot out of Sodom and the cosmic system of Satan but you can't take Sodom and the cosmic system out of Lot.

Genesis 19:36, "Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father."

Genesis 19:37, "The firstborn bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day."

Genesis 19:38, "As for the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi; he is the father of the sons of Ammon to this day."

Bruce K. Waltke, "This typical genealogical conclusion begins the story of the bitter animosity of Moab and Ammon against Israel (see Num. 23-25; 2 Kings 3). The Moabites and Ammonites were rejected by God, however, not because of their questionable lineage but because of their mistreatment of Israel (see Deut. 23:3-6). Yet from this lineage will come Ruth, and so Jesus Christ (see Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:5). Because of Ruth's faith, she will be reckoned among the tribe of Judah" (Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 280).

This account of Lot's incest appears in the Bible in order to give the origin of the Moabite and Ammonite nations that played major roles as long established enemies in the history of Israel. This account of Lot's incest and his drunkenness

illustrates the degrading effect that living in Sodom according to the standard of the evil of Satan's cosmic system had on Lot's daughters.

2 Peter 2:6-9 records that Lot was a "righteous" man meaning a believer and yet he chose to live as a "cosmic" believer (1 Cor. 3:3).

In Genesis 19, we see the end of a downward progression in the life of Lot since Genesis 13:12 records that Lot "moved his tents as far as Sodom." Then, we see him "living in Sodom" according to Genesis 14:12 and finally we read in Genesis 19:1 that Lot was "sitting in the gate of Sodom." Then he hesitated as Sodom's destruction loomed (19:16) and finally he ended up committing incest with his daughters in a cave (19:30-38).

Lot illustrates graphically how far a believer can fall if he departs from doing God's will and chooses to be seduced by the temptations of Satan's cosmic system.

The major revelation of this chapter is that it is foolish for a believer to become attached to the things of this world since they will corrupt him, ending up in dying discipline.

Genesis 20

Genesis 20:1-2 records Abraham telling a half-lie or half-truth to Abimelech saying that Sarah was his sister, which she was but a half-sister. Abraham fails to tell Abimelech that Sarah is his wife and fails to do this because he is afraid that Abimelech will kill him in order to secure Sarah for himself. This half-lie endangers not only Sarah but also Abimelech.

Although, he is not mentioned in the passage, Satan is the invisible enemy of God's people who is behind the scenes influencing Abraham and tempting him to enter into fear, worry and anxiety. Satan's purpose for doing this is so that he can prevent the birth of Christ by preventing the birth of Isaac who was to be in the line of Christ.

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth (Gen. 4:25-26; Luke 3:38) and Shem (Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36). Then, as recorded in Genesis 12:3 God informs Abraham that Jesus Christ would be his descendant and now

we saw in Genesis 17 that Abraham and Sarah's future son, Isaac would be in the line of Christ as well.

In Genesis 20, we see another failure of Abraham and yet the Lord's treats him in unconditional love and remains faithful to the covenant, which He established with Abraham.

2 Timothy 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

Genesis 20:1, "Now Abraham journeyed from there toward the land of the Negev, and settled between Kadesh and Shur; then he sojourned in Gerar."

"**Journeyed**" is the verb *nasa`* (US^n*) (naw-saw), which means, "to pull up" stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for "breaking camp."

According to Genesis 18:1, "**from there**" is a reference to "**the oaks of Mamre**," which was located in "Hebron" nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba.

The question arises, "why did Abraham leave the oaks of Mamre in Hebron?" It appears that he left because the view from Hebron overlooking the destruction of the Dead Sea region was too much for Abraham to take.

The Word of God does not record that Abraham was aware or informed that Lot was still alive. The Word of God does say in Genesis 19:29 that God did answer Abraham's intercessory prayer and delivered Lot from the destruction.

Abraham left Hebron and headed in a southwesterly direction, settling between Kadesh and Shur towards Egypt and then heading north to Gerar. Therefore, it appears that Abraham packed up and left Hebron and went to Gerar in order to stop being reminded of the destruction of Sodom and from his perspective possibly the death of his nephew Lot. So it appears that Abraham was operating again in unbelief by leaving Hebron since if he believed that God had answered his prayer to deliver Lot, he would have stayed or at least searched for Lot but it appears he didn't.

The region of the "**Negev**" extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending

south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

"**Kadesh**" means, "holy", and was an oasis about seventy miles southwest of the Dead Sea and was located west of Israel's western boundary, the River of Egypt or the Wadi el-Arish, in the southwest Negev.

The name "**Shur**" means, "wall" and was a city on the borders of Egypt and Palestine.

The word "**sojourned**" is the Hebrew verb *gur* (rWG), which refers to a specific legal status of a person who lives as a resident and is in a dependent legal status and is not a native, but is dwelling upon the land.

In societies, which possess a clan structure, this person is without legal protection since he has no blood ties. Such a person, like Abraham, would have been dependent upon a native to recognize and protect him, which was the case we saw in Egypt and here in Gerar.

The Mari documents (1800 B.C.) indicate that the relationship between "sitting" farmers and nomadic herders (such as Abraham) was that contracts were drawn up concerning grazing and watering rights. This relationship is known as "dimorphism" as these two distinct yet interrelated cultures exist side by side.

Abraham is entering into a land, where he no legal rights and protection, which will affect his decision-making and will cause him to enter into a contract that will compromise his wife and integrity and witness before the unbeliever.

"**Gerar**" was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines.

According to archaeological excavations, "**Gerar**" was a prosperous city, controlling a lucrative caravan route indicating that Abraham was tempted to transact some business there.

Abraham does not get into trouble in Gerar because he is out of the geographical will of God since Gerar is still in the land of Canaan but he does get into trouble for lying.

Undoubtedly, Satan, knowing that the Lord is about to fulfill His promise and give Abraham and

Sarah a child, is going to attempt to thwart the Lord's plans in Gerar.

Genesis 20:2, "Abraham said of Sarah his wife, 'She is my sister.' So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah."

On two occasions (Gen. 12 and 20) Abraham placed Sarah in a potentially adulterous situation to save his own life. He said to those in Gerar that Sarah was his sister but this is a half-truth.

As Abraham later explains to Abimelech, Sarah and Abraham shared the same father Terah but had different mothers (see Genesis 20:12). Therefore, Sarah was Abraham's half-sister but Abraham failed to inform the inhabitants of Gerar and Abimelech that Sarah was his wife because he was in fear for his life that Abimelech would kill him and take Sarah.

Now, notice that Abraham's fear that Abimelech would kill him and take Sarah into his harem indicates that Sarah was still very beautiful even though she was approximately ninety years old at the time.

The custom in the ancient world would not allow a foreign prince such as Abraham and his entourage to live in Gerar without making a treaty or contract. The custom also was for the foreign prince to give an acceptable daughter or a sister into the Abimelech's harem to seal the treaty and guarantee the prince's good behavior while in Gerar. Therefore, Abraham is telling Sarah to say to the people of Gerar that she is his sister, which is a half truth since she was his half-sister, having the same father Terah but different mothers according to Genesis 20:12.

If no treaty were made, crossing the border into Gerar would be considered an invasion, an act of war. Abraham was reasoning that if he didn't make a treaty they would attack and kill him and take Sarah into Abimelech's harem as a trophy of war, as was the custom. If Abraham made the treaty she would go into Abimelech's harem, but at least he reasoned that he would stay alive and be able to take care of those under his protection. He also expected that Sarah would be treated well because of her great beauty.

As was the case we saw in Genesis 12 with Pharaoh of Egypt, the irony is that Abraham is

making a contract with an unbeliever, Abimelech rather than placing his faith in the contract that the Lord made with him.

Principle: Better to trust the Lord with your life than with men.

Psalm 118:8-9, "It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in man. It is better to take refuge in the LORD than to trust in princes."

Abraham attempts to deal with his fears with his own human power and intellect. As we saw in Genesis 12 with Pharaoh, he has failed as Sarah's husband but Sarah has not failed as his wife since she is being obedient to him. The Lord is going to protect and honor Sarah for obeying her husband even though her husband is failing in his authority as her husband.

Principle for Christian women who are married, the Lord will protect you even if your husband fails in his authority as your husband.

Sarah's submissiveness to her husband is an excellent example for Christian women to follow when conducting themselves in their marriages, especially in adversity.

1 Peter 3:6, "just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear."

Now, you might say, how could Abraham commit this terrible sin again? The answer is simple, Abraham, like all men whether believer or unbeliever possesses a sin nature.

Every one in the human race possesses an old sin nature as a result of the imputation of Adam's original sin in the garden at the moment of physical birth, which makes them physically alive but spiritually dead and yet qualified for grace.

Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

The fact that we all have a sin nature means that at any time we can enter into sin, thus Abraham simply makes a bad decision, which is motivated by his sin nature trend to fear, worry and anxiety.

The Lord is not happy with this situation since the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ was to come through the line of Abraham and Sarah. Sarah is an innocent victim of Abraham's stupidity and the Lord will defend her honor. Therefore, the Lord will intervene and exercise His omnipotence to overrule Abraham's bad decision and force Abimelech to release Sarah to Abraham.

Genesis 20:2

“Abraham said of Sarah his wife, ‘She is my sister.’ So Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah.”

“Took,” is the 3rd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *laqach* (lq^l*), which means that Abimelech sent messengers to “fetch, retrieve, summon” Sarah in order to add her to his harem.

So we have Abimelech here dispatching his courtiers in order to bring Sarah into his presence in the palace and add her to his harem.

The name “Abimelech” means, “my father is king” and is not a proper name but rather a title for royalty among the Philistines, just as the term “Pharaoh” and “Caesar” were.

As we have noted, Satan played a part in this also. He plays a part in every sin, but he would have been especially interested in letting Abimelech have sex with Sarah since that would have thrown doubt on the child she would bring into the world.

We see several times that the devil tries to cut the line which leads to the coming of the Messiah into this world. In the days of Esther he tries to exterminate the whole Jewish race. After the captivity in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, he entices the returned captives to intermarry with the heathen nations, so that the Jewish identity would be wiped out. He had the same purpose in the days of Malachi. From Malachi 2:11-15 we understand that the coming of the Messiah according to the line God promised was endangered by Israel's practice of divorcing their Jewish wives and

marrying heathen ones. The last belated effort was of course the massacre of the infants in Bethlehem.

Satan is behind the scenes manipulating Abraham to enter into fear of being killed by Abimelech. He uses the fear of death to manipulate the human race to not trust God and serve him.

Hebrews 2:14, 15

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

“and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

Instead of entering into fear and saying that Sarah was his sister, Abraham should have prayed to the Lord for protection.

Fear is a result of unbelief and unbelief is failure to trust that God will protect and provide for us. The apostle Paul taught the Philippian believers to pray to the Father rather than entering into fear.

Philippians 4:6, 7

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

“And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Abraham should have prayed for protection instead of entering into fear. Prayers for protection from God fill the Bible.

Psalm 59:1-2, “Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; Set me securely on high away from those who rise up against me. Deliver me from those who do iniquity and save me from men of bloodshed.”

Psalm 140:1-5

“Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men who devise evil things in their hearts; They continually stir up wars. They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah.”

“Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men who have purposed to trip up my feet. The proud have hidden a trap for me, and cords; They have spread a net by the wayside; They have set snares for me. Selah.”

The Bible teaches that fear, worry and anxiety are a sin because it calls into question the perfect immutable character and integrity of God or in other words, His love for the believer.

Matthew 6:19-34

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.”

“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.”

“for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

“The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.”

“But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

“For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

“And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?”

“And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin.”

“yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.”

“But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!”

“Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’”

“For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.”

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

The apostle Peter instructed believers to cast all anxiety upon the Lord in prayer.

1 Peter 5:1-11

“Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed.”

“shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness.”

“nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock.”

“And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

“You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.”

“casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

“Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”

“But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

“After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.”

“To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

Trusting in God to keep His promises will protect the believer’s soul from stress, fear, worry and anxiety. Abraham’s fear of being killed by Abimelech was a total lack of faith or in other words, a total lack of trust and confidence in God’s ability to protect him.

Psalm 56:11, “In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?”

Psalm 28:7, “The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.”

Proverbs 30:5, “Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.”

Since God is faithful, He will protect us from Satan and the kingdom of darkness.

2 Thessalonians 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

Genesis 20:1-2 teaches us that lying will eventually get us into trouble. The Lord hates lying and prohibits believers from entering into it.

Proverbs 12:22, “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD.”

Proverbs 6:16, “There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him.”

Proverbs 6:17-19

“Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.”

“A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil.”

“A false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

Ephesians 4:25, “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.”

In Genesis 20:3-7, we have the record of God intervening into the situation with Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech by speaking to Abimelech in a dream prohibiting him from keeping Sarah in his harem and having sexual intercourse with her. Thereby thwarting Satan’s attempt to prevent the birth of Isaac and ultimately, the birth of the human nature of Jesus Christ who would come from the line of Isaac.

Genesis 20:3

“But God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night, and said to him, ‘Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married.’”

“**God**” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God has sovereignly determined to intervene to protect Sarah and prevent Abimelech from keeping her in his harem and having sexual intercourse with her, thus ensuring the birth of Isaac and protecting the line of Christ.

God informs Abimelech that Sarah who he had taken into his harem was a married woman and therefore he would be guilty of adultery and deserving of death.

Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”

Proverbs 6:32, “The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it.”

Leviticus 20:10, “If there is a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s

wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.”

Sarah would not be guilty of the death penalty because she did not choose to be a member of Abimelech’s harem. This was against her will.

Adultery was not only considered a “great sin” by the Israelites but also it was among many Semitic groups as evidenced at Ugarit and in Egyptian marriage contracts.

A comparison of Genesis 20:6 and 17 indicates that God had already put Abimelech under a curse of some sort since Genesis 20:6 states that God had prevented Abimelech from having sex with Sarah and he was healed as a result of Abraham’s intercessory prayer for him.

Abimelech was prevented from having children and thus implying that God gave him a physical problem that prevented him from performing sexually.

God’s statement that Abimelech was a “**dead man**” does “not” mean that God was predicting his immediate death but that if Abimelech proceeded to keep Sarah in his harem and did not release her and had sex with her, that he would be guilty of death. God is warning him in effect by saying this to Abimelech.

Of course, as we read on, Abimelech did not know that Sarah was a married woman and God knew this as well since He is omniscient and in fact had prevented Abimelech from committing adultery with Sarah.

Genesis 20:4, “Now Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, ‘Lord, will You slay a nation, even though blameless?’”

The statement that “**Abimelech had not come near her**” means that he had not had sexual intercourse with Sarah. As Genesis 20:3 states, he simply had added Sarah to his harem but had not had sex with her since Genesis 20:6 records that God had prevented him from doing so.

“**Lord**” is the noun *ʾadhon* (/w{da*}, which is a term of respect denoting Abimelech’s awareness of and acknowledgement of God as the sovereign governing authority over the entire human race.

Abimelech’s question and plea, “**will You slay a nation, even though blameless**” is an appeal to divine justice in this case.

Genesis 20:5

“Did he not himself say to me, ‘She is my sister’? And she herself said, ‘He is my brother.’ In the integrity of my heart and the innocence of my hands I have done this.”

Abimelech’s defense before God is two-fold: (1) He had not had sex with Sarah (2) Information about Sarah’s married state was withheld from him by Abraham and Sarah.

Genesis 20:6, “Then God said to him in the dream, ‘Yes, I know that in the integrity of your heart you have done this, and I also kept you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her.’”

“**I know**” expresses God’s omniscient knowledge of all the facts in the case regarding Abraham, Sarah and Abimelech. God acknowledges that Abimelech possesses integrity of heart in that he did not know Sarah was married to Abraham. Therefore, he was innocent of any wrongdoing.

God counters Abimelech’s first argument by stating that He had kept him from sinning by having sex with Sarah.

“**I kept you from sinning**” refers to the “overruling will of God,” which indicates that God intervened and did not permit Abimelech to have sexual intercourse with Sarah resulted in adultery on Abimelech’s part making him would be worthy of death, thus God protected Abimelech from unwittingly committing adultery.

God restrained Abimelech in a two-fold fashion. First, God warned him in the strongest terms: “Behold, you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is married” (Genesis 20:3). Secondly, Abimelech and his entire household were physically restrained from sinning against Sarah, even if they had wished to according to Genesis 20:6-7 and 17-18.

1 Chronicles 16 and Psalm 105 refer to this protection of Abraham and Sarah.

Psalm 105:14 ,15, “He permitted no man to oppress them, and He reproved kings for their

sakes: ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, and do My prophets no harm.’”

1 Chronicles 16:21, 22, “He permitted no man to oppress them, And He reproved kings for their sakes, saying, ‘Do not touch My anointed ones, And do My prophets no harm.’”

Genesis 20:7

“Now therefore, restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you will live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours.”

As to Abimelech’s second argument, God puts Abimelech’s integrity to the test. Now that he knows the truth, at once he must restore Sarah to Abraham.

“Prophet” is the noun *navi* (ayb! N*) (pronounced nah-vee), “authorized spokesman for God.”

The first time that the word appears in the Old Testament is Genesis 20:7. The fact that the noun *navi* is employed with the Hebrew verb *palal*, “to pray” in Genesis 20:7 indicates that being a prophet was not primarily predicting the future but rather representing God and speaking the Words of God. Abimelech was told by God that Abraham was a prophet not that Abraham might predict the future but that Abraham might pray for him!

There were a number of activities that the prophets of God were involved in such as communicating doctrine, issuing judgments, communicating future events, serving in the Temple, performing miracles, proclaiming Messianic prophecies, and interceding through prayer for the people (Hab. 3).

“He will pray” is the 3rd person masculine singular hithpael imperfect form of the verb *palal* (ll^P*) and refers to “intercessory prayer.”

The Lord won’t listen to the prayer of Abimelech since he is an unbeliever but He will listen to the prayer of Abraham because he possessed divine righteousness.

Genesis 20:8-13 records Abraham giving three excuses to Abimelech as to why he lied to him and said that Sarah was his sister and not his wife.

Genesis 20:8

“So Abimelech arose early in the morning and called all his servants and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were greatly frightened.”

Abimelech does not procrastinate but rises early in the morning in order to obey the divine instructions to restore Sarah to Abraham. He and his servants were terrified because they knew that the God of Abraham who spoke to Abimelech in a dream telling him to release Sarah was the very God who just recently destroyed the cities of the plain as recorded in Genesis 19.

Genesis 20:9

“Then Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, ‘What have you done to us? And how have I sinned against you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done to me things that ought not to be done.’”

Abimelech quickly sent for Abraham not because he felt he was wrong taking his “sister” away from him since that was part of the agreement for letting Abraham settle in the land. Rather, he did so because he feared that Abraham’s God would destroy him and his land if he didn’t.

God did not rebuke Abimelech but only warned him since he had not yet committed a sin. Yet, in Genesis 20:9, Abimelech rebukes Abraham since his lie put Abimelech and his household in great danger.

Also, God never rebukes Abraham for his conduct but rather let’s Abimelech, a heathen king do it, which would humble Abraham since he is Abimelech’s superior spiritually.

The first rhetorical question, “**what have you done to us**” expresses Abimelech’s shock as to Abraham’s conduct.

The second rhetorical question, “**how have I sinned against you that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin,**” expresses his moral indignation.

Notice that Abimelech shows great leadership over and concern for his people, more than Abraham did as demonstrated by his question to Abraham, “**what had you done to US?**”

Notice that adultery was considered “**a great sin**” even by this heathen king and his countrymen.

The Word of God prohibits adultery.

Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”

Abraham’s lie about his wife Sarah has compromised his testimony before this heathen king and his subjects and has invited rebuke from the cosmic system of Satan.

Christians are ambassadors for Christ and are commanded to keep their behavior excellent before the unbeliever in order to win the unbeliever to Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:20, “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.”

1 Peter 2:12, “Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.”

Just as Lot’s compromised his testimony before the Sodomites as recorded in Genesis 19, so Abraham in Genesis 20 compromised his testimony before Abimelech and the citizens of Gerar by lying.

The Lord hates lying and prohibits believers from entering into it.

Proverbs 12:22, “Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD.”

Abimelech’s statement “You have done to me things that ought not to be done” demonstrates his awareness of a moral code even among the unbeliever.

The apostle Paul taught that God has instilled an awareness of a moral code in the conscience of every human being, believer and unbeliever alike.

Romans 2:14, 15

“For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves.”

“in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”

Genesis 20:10, “**And Abimelech said to Abraham, ‘What have you encountered, that you have done this thing?’**”

Abimelech’s next rhetorical question, “**what have you encountered that you have done this thing**” expresses his desire to ascertain as to what Abraham saw in Gerar that would cause him to think that there would be no respect for God’s law prohibiting adultery and murder. He is in effect saying to Abraham, “what did you see in Gerar that would lead you to think that we were murderers and adulterers?”

Genesis 20:11-13 records Abraham’s three excuses for his conduct in Gerar.

Genesis 20:11, “**Abraham said, ‘Because I thought, surely there is no fear of God in this place, and they will kill me because of my wife.’**”

The expression “**fear of God**” involves general revelation regarding moral standards known by believer and unbeliever alike through conscience and accepted by them out of fear of God’s judgment.

Abraham indicates that his conduct was the result of fear, which is based upon a lack of faith or trust in the Lord’s protection. This fear of Abraham’s was based upon a faulty premise, namely, that God is only able to act when men are willing to obey. Abraham erroneously thought that God could save him only in a place where He was known and feared by men.

This was the same fear based upon a lack of faith in the Lord that Abraham displayed twenty-five years before in Egypt with Pharaoh as recorded in Genesis 12 where he didn’t think that God could deliver him from Pharaoh.

Incidentally, this unbelief had to disregard specific revelation, for shortly before this incident God had twice told Abraham that Sarah would become pregnant and bear a child within the year (17:19, 21; 18:10).

Abraham's conduct differs little from that of Lot in Sodom (Gen. 19). Just as Lot sacrificed the purity of his two virgin daughters to the mob of gay men in Sodom in order to protect his guests (two elect angels) so Abraham was willing to sacrifice his wife to protect himself from harm.

Genesis 20:12, "Besides, she actually is my sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother, and she became my wife."

Abraham's statement, though a lie, was technically factual since Sarah was, indeed, his sister, the daughter of his father, but not his mother. She was Abraham's sister, indeed but he did not say that she was his wife. This kind of kinship marriage between Abraham and Sarah was not yet prohibited among God's people since the Mosaic Law, which prohibited such things, was not yet given (Lev. 18:9, 11; Deut. 27:22; Ezek. 22:11).

Genesis 20:13, "and it came about, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This is the kindness which you will show to me: everywhere we go, say of me, 'He is my brother.'"

Abraham also explains that since God's plan for his life called for him to wander, he instructed Sarah when they entered a new place to say that she is his sister out of fear that her great beauty would cause the king of the land to kill him in order to add her to his harem.

Abraham makes a true statement that God's plan for his life was for him to wander about the land of Canaan, which precipitated his agreement with Sarah to state that she is his sister when they settled in a new place.

In Genesis 20:13, when Abraham states that God caused him to wander, he is not blaming God or complaining about Him but simply issuing a statement of fact.

Abraham erroneously thought that the kidnapping of women was commonplace in Gerar indicating he did not have a good view of the heathen and which view he more than likely acquired after seeing what the Lord did to the cities of the plain.

In Abraham's thinking, his actions before Abimelech were not to be taken personally but

were merely a policy he had with his wife, which was established many years ago. What Abraham in substance is saying was that "we've always done it that way before so why should it be set aside after so many years?" His policy was evil because it expressed his lack of faith in the Lord's protection.

In the end, there is no excuse for Abraham's conduct and he should have simply admitted he was wrong in deceiving Abimelech. At this time it appears that Abraham has not accepted responsibility for his sin since he never confesses his guilt to Abimelech.

The fact that God answered Abraham's intercessory prayer for Abimelech indicated that he did in fact confess to God his sin of lying since God would not answer his prayer while he was out of fellowship.

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

God would not have accepted Abraham's intercessory prayer for Abimelech if he were harboring any sin according to Psalm 66:18.

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

Abraham would not admit his guilt to Abimelech since he was not Abraham's judge but rather the Lord was and all sin was in reality against the Lord according to Psalm 51:4.

Psalm 51:4a, "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight."

In Genesis 20:14-16, we have the record of Abimelech obeying God and restoring Sarah to Abraham motivated out of fear of being killed by God if he did not do so. In this passage, Abimelech gives gifts to Abraham and Sarah resulting in the vindication of Sarah.

Genesis 20:14

"Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him."

Abimelech obeyed God and restore Sarah to Abraham "not" because he loved God but because

he lived in fear that he would be killed by God as God threatened to do to him if he had sexual intercourse with Sarah as recorded in Genesis 20:3. His obedience was based upon fear of judgment rather than love and respect.

Abimelech was an unbeliever and of course Sarah was a believer. God prohibits the marriage and sexual unions of believers with unbelievers.

2 Corinthians 6:14, 15

“Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?”

“Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?”

God was protecting Sarah from getting pregnant through this heathen king and by doing so God was insuring the fulfillment of His promise of the birth of Isaac who would continue the line of the human nature of the Promised Seed (see Genesis 3:15).

Satan wanted to prevent the birth of the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ and therefore desired to see Abimelech take Sarah as his wife. So we see God intervening and protecting Sarah and insuring that Isaac would be born through the sexual union of Abraham and Sarah.

Genesis 20:15, “Abimelech said, ‘Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please.’”

Abimelech also gave Abraham permission to stay wherever he wanted in Gerar’s territory without any treaty or compensation since he knew that Abraham was a representative of the Lord.

Genesis 20:16, “To Sarah he said, ‘Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver; behold, it is your vindication before all who are with you, and before all men you are cleared.’”

Social convention demands that Abimelech present his gift for Sarah through Abraham who is the male head of the family. Abimelech offered Abraham and Sarah restitution because of fear that Abraham’s God would destroy him and his kingdom and not out of repentance. Because of

this fear of being destroyed by Abraham’s God, restitution was made.

First, Sarah was given back to her husband Abraham along with sheep, oxen, and servants (verse 14). Then, to Abraham the invitation was extended for him to settle in the land wherever he chose (verse 15). Finally, a thousand pieces of silver were given to Abraham, which was a tremendous amount of money in those days and served as a symbol of Sarah’s vindication.

Abimelech gave this gift of the thousand shekels as a compensation for the offense against Sarah, so that she was fully vindicated as not having sinned in the sight of everyone and her household would recognize this.

Genesis 20:17-18 gives us the record of Abraham interceding in prayer for Abimelech.

Genesis 20:17, “Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children.”

Genesis 20:18, “For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife.”

“Prayed” is the 3rd person masculine singular hithpael imperfect form of the verb *palal* (ll^P*) and refers to “intercessory prayer,” which is praying for both the temporal and spiritual needs of both believers and unbelievers (Luke 23:34; Eph. 1:16-23; 3:14-19; 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1-4).

There are five essential elements to prayer: (1) Confession (2) Thanksgiving (3) Worship (4) Intercession (5) Petition.

Confession

1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Thanksgiving

Colossians 4:2, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”

Worship

Psalms 18:3, “I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”

Intercession

Ephesians 6:18, "By means of every kind of specific detailed reverential prayer requests, all of you make it your habit to pray at each and every opportunity while in fellowship with the Spirit. Now, for this very purpose, all of you make it your habit to stay alert (in prayer) with every kind of persistent specific detailed requests with regards to each and every one of the saints."

Petition

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

All prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Luke 11:2, "And He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.'"

Prayer must be made in the name or Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

The believer is to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because it is through the merits of His impeccable Person and Finished Work on the Cross and Advocacy with the Father as well as the believer's union with Him that gives the believer the privilege to boldly approach the throne of God in prayer.

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Praying in our Lord's name means that we are to pray to the Father consciously aware of our exalted position where we are seated at the Father's right hand because of our eternal union and identification with Christ.

Ephesians 2:6, "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Jude 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit."

Every church age believer is commanded in Scripture to pray (Mt. 7:7; Eph. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17).

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Make it your habit to pray."

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, 15

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

"And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Abraham's prayer was successful because it was according to the will of God.

Answered prayer demands faith on the part of the believer (Mt. 17:20; Ja. 5:15).

James 1:5, 6

"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."

"But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind."

Abraham's prayer for Abimelech was successful because he offered it in faith.

Answered prayer demands perseverance on the part of the believer.

Matthew 7:7, "Ask repeatedly, and it will be given to you; seek repeatedly, and you will find; knock repeatedly, and it will be opened to you."

The Scriptures do not command a set time for prayer or length, but rather the believer is to pray day and night, nor does the Scripture command that a certain posture accompany prayer since it is the attitude of the heart, which is important to God, thus it can be accomplished sitting, standing or kneeling down.

The believer is to not only pray as an individual but also a part of a corporate unit in the local assembly as an expression of unity (Acts 12:12; 16:25; 20:36).

Prayer solves problems (Kgs. 17:1; cf. 18:36-46; Acts 12:1-17; Phlp. 4:6).

The believer-priest should have a prayer list whether mental or written down. You can make intercessory prayer for others by simply mentioning their names without any specific need of theirs in mind or you can pray for their specific needs when you have specific information regarding their needs.

Genesis 20:17, “Abraham prayed to God, and God healed Abimelech and his wife and his maids, so that they bore children.”

Genesis 20:18, “For the LORD had closed fast all the wombs of the household of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.”

Notice that Abraham is praying for Abimelech who is an unbeliever. The Word of God commands the believer to enter into intercessory prayer on behalf of all men since God desires all men to be saved (1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Tm. 2:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:9; Jn. 3:16-17).

1 Timothy 2:1-4

“First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men.”

“for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.”

“This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”

“who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

“**Entreaties**” is the noun *deesis* (devhsi\$) and refers to intercessory prayer where Paul offers up to the Father specific detailed requests on behalf of all men.

“**Prayers**” is the noun *proseuche* (proseuhv), which refers to “a face to face audience with the Father in order to present a request.”

“**Petitions**” is the noun *enteuxis* (e&nteuci\$), which refers to that aspect of prayer where the believer goes as a child of God to the Father on behalf of another.

“**Thanksgivings**” is the noun *eucharistia* (eu)xaristiva), which refers to the act of giving thanks to the Father in appreciation for who and what He is and His logistical grace provision of those in governmental authority.

Genesis 20:18 teaches us the power of intercessory prayer since Abraham's appropriated the power of God, which healed Abimelech and his family. Abraham's intercession for Abimelech manifested that he loved Abimelech as God loved Abimelech and teaches us that if we operate in the love of God, we will intercede in prayer for all men since intercessory prayer for others is an expression of the love of God.

The Lord Jesus Christ expressed His love for those who mocked, scourged, vilified and crucified Him by interceding for them before the Father (Lk. 23:33-34).

Luke 23:33, 34

“When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.”

“But Jesus was saying, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’ And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves.”

If we love the unbeliever, we will pray that God would bring in people and circumstances that would cause the unbeliever to have the humility to give the Gospel a hearing and that they would be “exposed” to the Gospel so that they can make a decision to either accept or reject Jesus Christ as Savior.

Nowhere do the Scriptures sanction or command believers to pray that God would save the unbeliever since God, because He is just and righteous, cannot coerce or make the unbeliever do anything against His will, thus God cannot save the unbeliever unless the unbeliever makes a decision to accept Christ as Savior.

Although God's will is that all men be saved, God cannot force any human being to believe in His Son Jesus Christ against their will, thus people go to the Lake of Fire forever and ever not because God desires it but because they choose to.

The believer receives the capacity to pray for all men, when he accepts by faith Christ's love for him while he was an enemy of God and responds in obedience to Christ's love for him, and which love, the Spirit reveals in the Word of God (see 1 John 4:16, 19).

Abraham was a man who was the beneficiary of God's mercy, which is based upon His love (see Eph. 2:1-9) and thus he seeks to secure mercy for others. Abraham's intercession for Abimelech reflected the love that God had for Abimelech.

The fact that God heard and answered Abraham's intercessory prayer for Abimelech and his household clearly implies that Abraham had confessed his sin since God will not hear even the prayer request or intercession of a believer who is out of fellowship.

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

Psalm 32:5, "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah."

It appears that after this episode in Gerar that Abraham and Sarah learned the lesson of faith and trusting in the Lord and not going to the world or relying upon their own devices to solve their problems since we never again to we read from this point forward in Genesis that Abraham failed in this area again.

Genesis 21

Genesis 21:1-4 records the fulfillment of the Lord's promise to give Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age. Also, we see Abraham obeying

the Lord's commands to name the child "Isaac" and circumcise the child on the eighth day.

Genesis 21:1, "Then the LORD took note of Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah as He had promised."

Genesis 21:2, "So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the appointed time of which God had spoken to him."

"Lord" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Abraham and Sarah and fulfilling His promise to give them a child in their old age.

"Took note" is the verb *paqadh* (dq^P*) (paw-kad), which means, "to intervene" in life of someone in order to bless them.

Therefore, the verb *paqadh* in Genesis 21:1 means that the Lord "intervened" on behalf of Sarah in order to bless her with a child.

In Genesis 21:1, the birth of Isaac illustrates the principle taught in Jeremiah 1:12 that the Lord watches over His Word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:12, "Then the LORD said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.'"

In Genesis 17:16-21, the Lord promised Abraham that he would impregnate Sarah and they would have a child and call him "Isaac" and Genesis 21:1 records the fulfillment of the promise.

In Genesis 18:10 and 14, the Lord promised Sarah that she would have a child one year later and Genesis 21:1 records the fulfillment of the promise. The fulfillment of this promise to Abraham and Sarah to give them a child in their old age was a demonstration of the Lord's faithfulness to His covenant that He established with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-6; 17:1-8; 18:9-14).

Psalm 100:5, "For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations."

The birth of Isaac demonstrated that even though Abraham and Sarah were at times lacking in faith in the Lord, the Lord remained faithful to them.

2 Timothy 2:13, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

The fact that the Lord did what He had promised to Sarah was also a manifestation of the omnipotence of His Word.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The fact that the Lord fulfilled the promise to Abraham and Sarah reveals that they operated in faith meaning they took God at His Word (see Hebrews 11:11; Romans 4:18-22). The faith of Abraham and Sarah demonstrates the spiritual principle that you appropriate the omnipotence of God by operating in faith.

Matthew 17:20, “And He said to them, ‘Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.’”

The phrase “**in his old age**” emphasizes that God’s power overcame Abraham’s problem of being impotent sexually in his old age revealing that nothing is impossible with God.

Luke 1:37, “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

The phrase “**in his old age**” implies that God miraculously healed both Sarah and Abraham so that they might have the capacity to procreate again and have children.

Abraham was one hundred years old when Isaac was born according to Genesis 21:1 and Sarah was ninety-years old since Genesis 17:17 reveals that she was ten years younger than Abraham.

Henry M. Morris, “The bodies of Abraham and Sarah had been miraculously rejuvenated, their ages being one hundred and ninety years old, respectively (Gen. 17:17; 21:5). Sarah was

‘young’ enough again, not only to have a child but to nurse him (Gen. 21:7); Abraham was ‘young’ enough again not only to father Isaac, but also six other sons of his wife Keturah, after Sarah died (Gen. 25:2)! When God miraculously heals, it is not a partial healing, but a complete and instant restoration” (The Genesis Record, pages 366-367, Baker Book House).

The birth of Isaac demonstrates that the fulfillment of God’s promises depends completely upon God Himself. The birth of Isaac was not only designed to bring joy to Sarah and Abraham but also to all mankind since Isaac would be in the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed who would redeem mankind and destroy the works of the devil (See Genesis 3:15).

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth (Gen. 4:25-26; Luke 3:38) and Shem (Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36). Then, as recorded in Genesis 12:3 God informs Abraham that Jesus Christ would be his descendant.

In Genesis 17:15-21 and 18:9-14, we see that the birth of Isaac would continue the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ and we see its fulfillment in Genesis 21:1-2. Therefore, the birth of Isaac was essential for God to accomplish His purposes through Jesus Christ of redeeming and reconciling man to Himself as well as propitiating His holiness, which demanded that the sins of the world be judged.

In fact, the miraculous birth of Isaac foreshadows the miraculous birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Also, the birth of Isaac was the second step in forming the nation of Israel, from whom Jesus Christ would come since Isaac’s son Jacob, later named by God as Israel, had twelve sons who were heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (1 Chronicles 1:34; 2:1-2; Acts 7:8).

Through the nation of Israel would come the Savior of the world (John 4:22; Romans 9:3-5). To the nation of Israel would be given the Old Testament Scriptures, the adoption as sons, the Mosaic Law, the Shekinah Glory, the promises and the unconditional covenants (Davidic,

Palestinian, New and Abrahamic) (see Romans 9:1-5).

The phrase “**at the appointed time**” refers to the “literal” fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Sarah and Abraham exactly one year prior that they would have a child (Genesis 17:21 and 18:10, 14).

The phrase “**at the appointed time**” indicates that the birth of Isaac was right on “God’s” schedule rather than man’s and teaches that God is always right on time and never early or late in fulfilling His promises (see Habakkuk 2:3; Galatians 4:4).

Ecclesiastes 3:2, “A time to give birth and a time to die.”

Twenty-five years had passed since Abraham left Ur of the Chaldeans and during that time the Lord established His covenant with Abraham and enlarged upon it and reiterated it on different occasions (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-6; 17:1-8; 18:9-15). During this time, Abraham and Sarah’s faith was tested since a faith that is incapable of enduring trials and tribulations is no faith at all.

Our faith is tested to demonstrate that it is genuine and to produce character in us and of course to glorify God meaning to manifest the character and nature of God (see Romans 5:1-5).

From the human perspective, the Lord appeared to be delaying in fulfilling His promise in giving a child to Abraham and Sarah, but this is done to test their faith.

Jeremiah 20:12, “Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart.”

Arthur Pink, “God has reasons for delays. Not until man comes to the end of himself will God put forth His power. Not until man’s extremity is reached does God’s opportunity arrive. Not until our own powers are ‘dead’ will God act in grace.” (Gleanings in Genesis, page 183).

Arthur Pink, “God has more than one reason for His delays. Often it is to test the faith of His children, to develop their patience, to bring them to the end of themselves. His delays are in order that when He does act His delivering power may be more plainly evident, that what He does may be more deeply appreciated and that in consequence

He may be more illustriously glorified.” (Gleanings in Genesis, page 184).

Therefore, the fulfillment of the promise of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah teaches us that we must wait patiently upon God.

Hebrews 6:13-15

“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.”

“saying, ‘I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.’”

“And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.”

Psalm 37:7, “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.”

The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and Sarah teaches us that perseverance or endurance is essential in order to receive the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Perseverance is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances. Abraham and Sarah had to continue to bear up under the difficult circumstance of being childless in order to finally receive the promise of a child.

Romans 5:3, “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance.”

The Scriptures are designed to produce perseverance in us and to encourage us.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Many times, the Word of the Lord gave encouragement to Abraham (Gen. 15:1-6; 17:1-8).

Genesis 21:3, “**Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him, whom Sarah bore to him, Isaac.**”

The name “**Isaac**” means, “laughter” and was designated by God expressing Abraham’s joyful faith in the Lord’s ability to fulfill this promise.

The name “**Isaac**” was given to the Abraham and Sarah’s child because he would be a source of great joy to them.

The fact that the Lord commanded Abraham to name the child “**Isaac**” also illustrates that true joy and happiness is from the Lord.

1 Chronicles 16:27, “Splendor and majesty are before Him, strength and joy are in His place.”

The Holy Spirit produces a joy that is divine in the believer who is obedient to the Word of God.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

The name “**Isaac**” was an appropriate name since every time Abraham and Sarah would speak his name, they would remember how they laughed at God’s promise (Gen. 17:17; 18:12), a laugh of amazement in Abraham’s case and of doubt in Sarah’s case. They would also remember the great joy they shared when Isaac was finally born (see Genesis 21:6).

Job 8:21, “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouting.”

Abraham’s naming of the child “**Isaac**” was in obedience to the Word of the Lord since according to Genesis 17:19, the Lord commanded Abraham to give the child this name.

Genesis 21:4, “Then Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him.”

The fact that the Lord circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old was also in obedience to the Lord’s command as recorded in Genesis 17:9-14.

“**Circumcised**” is the verb *mul* (lWm) (mool), which refers to the act of cutting of the foreskin of the male’s penis and was given as a sign to Abraham and his biological descendants that they were set apart by God and yet was not given to justify or saved them.

Circumcision symbolized to the Jewish man that he was a member of an elect nation, a peculiar people, distinctly holy before God, in relation to

sexual conduct, so it came indirectly to speak of holiness in every phase of life.

The ordinance of circumcision could not save man but was to be the distinguishing sign of the Jewish nation from the other nations. The circumcision of Isaac was a visible sign that he was set apart to serve the purpose of God exclusively.

Now, the birth of Isaac “typifies” or “foreshadows” the birth of Christ.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between two historical entities. Therefore, we see that the historical event of the birth of Isaac “parallels” the historical event of the birth of Jesus Christ.

A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that the birth of Isaac is a type of the birth of Christ does “not” mean that Isaac is equal to the Lord but rather that Isaac’s birth foreshadows the birth of our Lord.

Now, there are at least seven ways in which the birth of Isaac foreshadows the birth of Christ.

First of all, Genesis 17:16 records that Isaac was the “promised” seed and son but so also was Christ according to Genesis 3:15 and Isaiah 7:14.

Genesis 17:16, “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel (God with us).”

The second way that Isaac’s birth foreshadows or typifies Christ’s birth is that there was a “lengthy interval” between God’s first promise to Abraham and its realization.

When Genesis 21:1 records that “**the Lord took note of Sarah as He said**”, the immediate

reference is to Genesis 17:16 and 18:14 but the remote reference was to the original promise in Genesis 12:7.

Genesis 12:7, "The LORD appeared to Abram and said, 'To your descendants I will give this land.' So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him."

In the same way that there was a lengthy interval between God's first promise to Abraham and its realization so also was there a lengthy interval between God's promise to send Christ and the actual fulfillment of it.

Thirdly, when Isaac's birth was announced to his mother Sarah, she asked in Genesis 18:13, "**Shall I indeed bear a child, when I am so old?**" The Lord's answer to her in Genesis 18:14 was "**Is anything too difficult for the LORD?**"

The analogy is that when the angel Gabriel made known to Mary that she was to be the mother of the Savior, she asked in Luke 1:34, "**How can this be, since I am a virgin?**" Gabriel's response recorded in Luke 1:37 was "**For nothing will be impossible with God.**" Therefore, in each case, the omnipotence of God was proclaimed following the announcement of the birth of the child.

The fourth way in which the birth of Isaac foreshadows or typifies the birth of Christ is that Isaac's name was specified by God before his birth according to Genesis 17:19, so also was Jesus Christ's name specified by God before His birth.

Matthew 1:21, "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Fifth, Isaac's birth took place at God's "**appointed time**" according to Genesis 21:2 and so also Jesus Christ's birth took place at the time appointed by God according to Galatians 4:4.

Galatians 4:4, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law."

Sixth, in the same way the birth of Isaac was a miracle so also was the birth of Christ a miracle.

Lastly, the seventh way in which the birth of Isaac foreshadowed or typified the birth of Christ is that the name "Isaac," which means, "laughter"

expressed the fact that Isaac would be his father, Abraham's delight and so also in the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ was His Father's delight according to Matthew 3:17.

Matthew 3:17, "and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.'"

The sevenfold type demonstrates the divine inspiration of the Scriptures and demonstrates that the book of Genesis, which has been attacked so much by Satan, was written by Moses under the inspiration of the Spirit.

2 Peter 1:20, 21

"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation."

"for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

"so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

Genesis 21:5-7 gives us the record of Sarah's joy and laughter upon finally receiving the fulfillment of God's promise and bearing a son for Abraham who was named Isaac.

Genesis 21:5, "**Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.**"

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on Genesis 21:5 writes the following: "The ages of the postdiluvians have decreased substantially (cf. 11:10-26). To produce at one hundred years and at ninety years is miraculous (see 17:17)" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 293, Zondervan).

The age of Abraham is specified as a hundred years old when Isaac was born in order to emphasize the omnipotence of God who from the human perspective had done the impossible.

Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Jeremiah 32:27, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

The apostle Paul prayed to the Father that the Holy Spirit would enlighten the Ephesian believers regarding the omnipotence of God that was directed towards them at the moment of salvation as a result of their union with Christ.

Ephesians 1:18-20

"I make it a habit to pray that the eyes of our heart would receive enlightenment for the purpose of knowing for certain what is the confidence of His calling and what are the glorious riches, which is His inheritance distributed among the saints."

"And what is the surpassing greatness of His divine omnipotence directed towards all of us who are believers. This is in accordance with the operative power, namely, the possession of power to overcome (the sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system) originating from His manifested power (through the resurrection and session of Christ)."

"Which He (the Father) exercised through the Person of Christ by raising Him (Christ) out from among the dead and by seating Him (Christ) at His right hand in the heavenlies."

The omnipotence of God raised the human nature of Christ from the dead.

Romans 1:4, "who (Jesus Christ) was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of integrity, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The same power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead will raise the believer from the dead.

1 Corinthians 6:14, " Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power."

The cross of Christ is the power of God, which delivers the believer from the sin nature, the cosmic system of Satan and Satan himself.

1 Corinthians 1:18, " For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,

but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

The Word of God manifests the omnipotence of God.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

The Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

God has given the believer a lifestyle of power.

2 Timothy 1:7, "For God has not given us a lifestyle of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."

The believer is eternally secure because of the omnipotence of God.

1 Peter 1:5, "who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Genesis 21:5, "Now Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him."

Gordon J. Wenham commenting on Genesis 21:5 writes the following: "The frequent reference in genealogies to the age at which a man fathered his first child suggests this was regarded as a most important milestone in his life (cf. 5:3, 6; 11:12, 14, etc.) (Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2, Genesis 16-50, page 80, Nelson Reference and Electronic).

Genesis 21:6, "Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.'"

Notice that Sarah attributes her laughter and joy to God who has blessed her with a baby boy in her old age.

Job 8:21, "He will yet fill your mouth with laughter and your lips with shouting."

The Holy Spirit produces a joy that is divine in the believer who is obedient to the Word of God.

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Sarah is experiencing the joy of the Lord as a result of the Lord fulfilling His promise to her.

The believer is commanded to rejoice.

1 Thessalonians 5:16, "Rejoice always."

The joy of the Lord is the direct result of obeying the Word of God.

Psalms 19:8, "The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."

The joy of the Lord is the direct result of trusting in the promises of God.

Psalms 28:7, "The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, and with my song I shall thank Him."

The joy of the Lord is the direct result of experiencing fellowship with God.

Psalms 16:11, "You will make known to me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; in your right hand there are pleasures forever."

Paul Sailhamer, "Joy is that deep settled confidence that God is in control in every area of my life."

Experiencing the joy of the Lord is the by-product of a life that is obedient to the will of God.

Genesis 21:6, "Sarah said, 'God has made laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.'"

Genesis 21:7, "And she said, 'Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.'"

Matthew Henry commenting on Sarah's joy writes the following: "God bestows mercies upon his people to encourage their joy in his work and service; and, whatever is the matter of our joy,

God must be acknowledged as the author of it, unless it be the laughter of the fool. When mercies have been long deferred they are the more welcome when they come. It adds to the comfort of any mercy to have our friends rejoice with us in it: All that hear will laugh with me; for laughing is catching. See Luke 1:58. Others would rejoice in this instance of God's power and goodness, and be encouraged to trust in him. See Ps 119:74." (From Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: New Modern Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1991 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.).

The reproach that Sarah experienced in life by not bearing children to Abraham was lifted and her bitterness, disappointment and tears were turned to laughter and joy.

Gordon J. Wenham makes the following comment regarding being childless in the ancient world: "It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world, for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman: to have a great brood of children was the mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure" (Word Biblical Commentary series, entitled "Genesis 15—50"; Waco: Word Books, 1994).

Her statement in Genesis 16:2 expresses her bitterness toward God.

Genesis 16:2, "So Sarai said to Abram, 'Now behold, the LORD has prevented me from bearing children. Please go in to my maid; perhaps I will obtain children through her.' And Abram listened to the voice of Sarai."

Genesis 18:12-15 also records Sarah's unbelief in the Lord's promise to give her a child in her old age.

Genesis 18:12, "Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have become old, shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?'"

Sarah's unbelief was temporary since Hebrews 11:11 records that she conceived Isaac because she considered God faithful to His promise.

Hebrews 11:11, "By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the

proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised.”

Now, we see here in Genesis 21:6-7, that her bitterness has been turned into laughter and joy and she attributes it solely to God.

“**God**” is the Hebrew noun *Elohim*, which is attributed to Sarah expressing her acknowledgement that God is omnipotent or all-powerful and was able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, namely, the birth of Isaac.

If you recall, in Genesis 17:16, God promised Abraham that He would “**ble**ss” Sarah so that Abraham would be able to impregnate her.

Genesis 17:16, “I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”

“**Bless**” is the piel (intensive) form of the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which is used twice in Genesis 17:16 indicating that the Lord would endue Sarah with power to not only have a child with Abraham but that she would be endued with power to be the mother of nations and kings.

Genesis 21:7, “**And she said, ‘Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.’**”

“**Children**” is the noun *ben* (/B@) (bane), which is “not” in the singular as we would expect but rather is in the “plural” expressing Sarah’s faith that God would produce offspring for Isaac (Israel) who were destined to be the vehicle used by God to bring blessing to the Gentiles.

So in Genesis 21:5-7, we see the joy and laughter but this joy would be short lived for later on this joy turned to anger and a crisis in the home of Abraham and Sarah as we will see this evening in Genesis 21:8-11. This crisis is the result of Hagar and Abraham’s son, Ishmael persecuting Sarah and Abraham’s son, Isaac, the son of promise who would carry on the line of Christ. The old animosity between Sarah and Hagar erupts again in the home of Abraham, eventually leading to a parting of the ways.

Genesis 21:8, “**The child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast on the day that Isaac was weaned.**”

Mothers usually nursed children for three years or longer in those days, which of course is unlike the West (see 1 Samuel 22-25; 2 Chronicles 31:16; 2 Maccabees 2:27). Because Isaac was the son of promise, the heir of the covenant, the one would carry on the line of the human nature of Christ who would provide salvation for all mankind, Abraham made a big feast to honor him. Abraham recognized the importance of Isaac in the plan of God.

Also, it was traditional in Abraham’s day to throw such a party since infant mortality was very high and to reach the age of two or three would be regarded as a significant accomplishment.

Genesis 21:9, “**Now Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, mocking.**”

The phrase “**Sarah saw**” indicates to the reader that he is going to see things from Sarah’s perspective.

“**The son of Hagar the Egyptian**” is Ishmael who was seventeen years old at this time.

The fact that Ishmael is seventeen at this point in the narrative is indicated in that Genesis 16:16 records that Abraham was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born and was one hundred when Isaac was born according to Genesis 21:5. This would make Ishmael fourteen when Isaac was born.

Genesis 21:8 records that Isaac was weaned and we know that a child was weaned at three years of age. Therefore, we can conclude that Ishmael was seventeen at this point in the narrative.

Ishmael legally had the right to a double portion of the inheritance because he was Abraham’s first-born son. However, a son by a slave woman, which Ishmael was, could forego his inheritance claim in exchange for freedom.

Now that Abraham had a son by his wife, Sarah did not want Ishmael to share Isaac’s inheritance. In fact, the Lord stated that He would not make His covenant with Ishmael but rather with Isaac. Therefore, Sarah wants to give Hagar and Ishmael

their freedom in order that Ishmael cannot receive a portion of the inheritance and the Lord agrees since it was according to the covenant He made with Abraham (see Gen. 15:1-6; 17:15-22).

“**Mocking**” is the verb *tsachaq* (Cj^x*) (tsaw-khak), which in the piel stem means, “to mock” indicating that Ishmael mocked Isaac.

Galatians 4:29 confirms this interpretation of the verb *tsachaq*.

Galatians 4:29, “But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”

Therefore, a comparison of Genesis 21:9 and Galatians 4:29 indicates that Ishmael was not only “mocking” Isaac but also “persecuting” him.

Ishmael mocked and persecuted Isaac more than likely out of envy and jealousy since prior to the birth of Isaac, Ishmael was the center of attention in the home. He must have heard of the miraculous birth of Isaac and that the Lord stated that Isaac was the son of promise and not Ishmael. This most surely led to resentment on the part of Ishmael towards Isaac.

To envy is to feel resentful, spiteful, and unhappy because someone else possesses or has achieved, what one wishes oneself to possess, or to have achieved.

Ishmael was resentful, spiteful towards Isaac since Isaac possessed something that he could never attain or achieve, namely, being the son of promise who would carry on the line of Christ and from whom the nation of Israel would originate.

Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.

Ishmael was resentful and intolerant and suspicious of his half-brother Isaac’s relationship to Abraham and the covenant promises given to Isaac. He was also guarded in his relationship with his father Abraham and did not tolerate Isaac and considered Isaac a rival for the affections of his father.

Jealousy originated in eternity past with Satan since he was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ’s relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic (James 3:14-16) since it is Satanic viewpoint. Ishmael is under Satanic influence as indicated in that he entered into jealousy towards his half-brother Isaac.

James 3:14-16

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”

“This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.”

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

Isaac was the object of Satanic attack at a young age since he was to carry on the line of Christ and was to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel from whom Christ would come and bring blessing to the entire world and destroy the works of the devil. Therefore, it was according to the will of God that Ishmael be removed from the home of Abraham otherwise the same situation with Cain and Abel would have taken place.

In Genesis 15:4 and 17:19-20, the Lord clearly stated that His covenant with Abraham would be continued forward with Isaac and not Ishmael.

Genesis 15:4, “Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’”

Genesis 17:19, 20

“But God said, ‘No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.’”

“As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

In Genesis 17:20, the Lord promises Abraham that Ishmael would be the father of twelve princes, which would comprise a great nation corresponding to Isaac who would be the father of the twelve tribes, which would comprise the nation of Israel.

Genesis 25:12-16 records the fulfillment of this promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael and his descendants.

Genesis 21:10, “Therefore she said to Abraham, ‘Drive out this maid and her son, for the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac.’”

Sarah’s demand that **“the son of this maid shall not be an heir with my son Isaac”** is consistent with what the Lord stipulated in His covenant with Abraham as recorded in Genesis 17:19-20 and Genesis 15:4. Sarah’s demand is to disinherit Ishmael so he will never share in the inheritance and Genesis 25:5-6 indicates that this took place.

Even though Sarah was sinning by harboring this bitterness and antagonism towards Hagar and Ishmael, it was God’s will that Hagar and Ishmael be removed from the home of Abraham.

This conflict between Sarah and Hagar, between Isaac and Ishmael, has been used by the apostle Paul as an illustration or allegory of the continuing conflict between law and grace, between the old Adamic sin nature received at physical birth and the new Christ nature received at the spiritual birth.

In Galatians 4:22-31, the apostle Paul speaks “figuratively” of the relationship between Abraham and his sons, Ishmael, Isaac, and his wives, Hagar and Sarah. Paul teaches that Hagar represents the Mosaic Law, and Ishmael is its fruit (slaves) whereas Sarah is a picture of God’s grace, and Isaac is its fruit (free sons).

Paul teaches the Galatians that prior to salvation they were under bondage to the Law but that through faith alone in Christ alone who redeemed them from the curse of the Law, they have been set free from the Law. Therefore, the apostle Paul teaches that in an allegorical sense Hagar who was a slave girl is a picture of the believer prior to salvation under bondage to the Law whereas Sarah

is a picture of the believer after salvation free from the Law.

Galatians 4:22-31

“For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free woman.”

“But the son by the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and the son by the free woman through the promise.”

“This is allegorically speaking, for these women are two covenants: one proceeding from Mount Sinai bearing children who are to be slaves; she is Hagar.”

“Now this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present Jerusalem, for she is in slavery with her children.”

“But the Jerusalem above is free; she is our mother.”

“For it is written, ‘REJOICE, BARREN WOMAN WHO DOES NOT BEAR; BREAK FORTH AND SHOUT, YOU WHO ARE NOT IN LABOR; FOR MORE NUMEROUS ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE THAN OF THE ONE WHO HAS A HUSBAND.’”

“And you brethren, like Isaac, are children of promise.”

“But as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so it is now also.”

“But what does the Scripture say? ‘CAST OUT THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON, FOR THE SON OF THE BONDWOMAN SHALL NOT BE AN HEIR WITH THE SON OF THE FREE WOMAN.’”

“So then, brethren, we are not children of a bondwoman, but of the free woman.”

Paul states that Abraham’s two sons, Ishmael and Isaac illustrate our two births: (1) Physical birth that makes us sinners with an old Adamic sin nature (2) Spiritual birth that makes us children of God with the nature of Christ.

Isaac illustrates the believer in that he was born according to the power of God since Galatians 4:29 says that Isaac was born **“according to the**

Spirit” whereas Ishmael illustrates the unbeliever in that he was born **“according to the flesh.”**

The fact that Ishmael, who was born according to the flesh, persecuted Isaac who was born according to the Spirit illustrates the problems that our old sin nature, which we received at physical birth, causes for our new nature, which we received at the spiritual birth.

Just as Ishmael was a **“wild donkey of a man”** and a slave that nobody could control, not even his mother so the indwelling old Adamic sin nature is at war with God and others and the Law cannot change or control it.

Hagar was cast out according to Genesis 21:9-10 and God subsequently approved of it according to Genesis 21:12 illustrating that the Law and grace are not compatible and at odds with each other (see Romans 11:6).

Just as Ishmael had to go once Isaac was born so the Law had to go once Christ had come.

Genesis 21:11, “The matter distressed Abraham greatly because of his son.”

Abraham’s great distress reflects his strong paternal affection for his son Ishmael. Abraham is an old man and would be a terrible heartbreak to him to have to send Ishmael whom he loved away. He is emotional and could care less about the legal or spiritual ramifications of having Ishmael remain in his home.

Isaac was to receive the full inheritance and Ishmael could not receive any of it since this was according to God’s will. Sarah was not looking at the spiritual ramifications but only that she wanted Hagar and her son out of her home.

Bruce K. Waltke, “In the Lipit-Ishtar law code (ca. 1875 B.C.) a clause stipulates that if a slave bears children and the father then grants freedom to her and her children, “the children of the slave shall not divide the estate with the children of their (former) master. Sarah’s demand to expel Hagar and Ishmael from any share in the inheritance appears to be based on moral and legal grounds” (Genesis, A Commentary, Bruce K. Waltke, page 294, Zondervan).

Genesis 21:12-14 records the expulsion Hagar and Ishmael from the home of Abraham and Sarah.

Genesis 21:12, “But God said to Abraham, ‘Do not be distressed because of the lad and your maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.’”

“God” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God has sovereignly determined to intervene in the life of Abraham and Sarah and direct Abraham to do as Sarah demanded and send Hagar and Ishmael away from their home.

Abraham was greatly distressed about Sarah’s demand since he loved Ishmael dearly and did not want to disinherit him and see the boy leave his home. The thought of sending the seventeen-year-old Ishmael away broke Abraham’s heart.

Abraham has a huge problem in his home between Sarah and Hagar and Isaac and Ishmael. He loves them all but they cannot get along with each other. Abraham needs to know God’s will in the matter and he turns to the Word of God for such guidance as indicated by the phrase **“God said.”**

The phrase **“God said”** is a reference to the Word of God, which gave Abraham comfort, encouragement and guidance in the midst of this adversity he was experiencing in his home.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

The Bible is “God-breathed” and therefore, is the Word of the Lord and not of men (Ex. 9:20; Num. 14:20; Isa. 16:13; Jer. 1:4; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 2:10; Zech. 1:1; Mal. 1:1).

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

“so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

“Inspired by God” is the noun *theopneustos*, which is a compound word derived from the words *theos*, “God,” and *pneo*, “breathe, breathe into” and therefore literally means, **“God-breathed.”**

The doctrine of inspiration contends that, God the Holy Spirit so supernaturally directed the human authors of Scripture, that without destroying their individuality, their literary style, their personal interests, their vocabulary, God's complete and connected thought towards man was recorded with perfect accuracy in the original languages of Scripture.

The original languages of Scripture contain the very words of God, and therefore, bear the "authority" of divine authorship. The Bible in its original languages is the exact record, the mind and will of God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 reveals that there are four categories of benefits from the Scriptures: (1) **"Teaching"**: The Bible is the Mind of Christ, and therefore, divine viewpoint. (2) **"Reproof"**: The Bible tells us where we fail when we hear it. (3) **"Correction"**: The Bible tells us how to correct and solve our problems. (4) **"Instruction in righteousness"**: Involves the entire scope of the Gospel and demonstrates how God can take a sinner and make him righteous through the work of Christ.

So the Word of God is giving Abraham guidance and direction and comfort in his adversity. All fathers and mothers should turn to the Word of God for comfort, guidance and direction when faced with a problem with their children rather than turning to their own human intellect or human rationalism or human experience or the world's way of doing things. The Word of God solved Abraham's problem.

Abraham is emotional at this point in the narrative, but he cannot solve his problems from his emotions or how he feels since emotion cannot think but is the responder in the soul to what is in the mentality of the soul. Abraham needs objective truth at this point to solve his problems. He must set aside his emotions and execute God's will, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture.

Abraham received direct revelation from the Lord since he did not have the completed canon of Scripture as we do today.

Genesis 21:12, "But God said to Abraham, 'Do not be distressed because of the lad and your

maid; whatever Sarah tells you, listen to her, for through Isaac your descendants shall be named.'"

"The lad" is a reference to Ishmael who is the son of Abraham and Hagar. Ishmael is seventeen at this point in the narrative since Genesis 16:16 records that Abraham was eighty-six years old when Ishmael was born and was one hundred when Isaac was born according to Genesis 21:5. This would make Ishmael fourteen when Isaac was born.

Genesis 21:8 records that Isaac was weaned and we know that a child was weaned at three years of age. Therefore, we can conclude that Ishmael was seventeen at this point in the narrative.

"Your maid" identifies Hagar as Abraham's female servant rather than his wife indicating that the sexual union between Hagar and Abraham was not according to the will of God.

Genesis 21:12 contains the first recorded instance in the Bible where God said to a man to listen to his wife. Abraham was told to obey Sarah's demand to expel Ishmael from their home because it was according to the will of God. Husbands should only obey their wives requests if they are in accordance with the will of God, which is revealed in the Word of God by the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 16 records Abraham got into serious trouble because he obeyed his wife Sarah's command to use Hagar her slave girl as a surrogate to solve their problem of childlessness, and which command was against the will of God. God agrees with Sarah because the human nature of Jesus Christ would come through Isaac and not Ishmael.

Sarah was not thinking as God was thinking but rather she wants Ishmael out of her home because she does not like Ishmael or his mother Hagar and so we see that she was right in her presumption but wrong in her attitude.

The promise **"through Isaac your descendants shall be named"** indicates that the Promised Seed, the Savior, Jesus Christ would come through the line of Isaac rather than Ishmael.

Genesis 17:19, "But God said, 'No, but Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My

covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him.”

Though God would bless Ishmael, He emphasized to Abraham that His covenant with him was with Isaac alone and his seed.

Genesis 21:13, “And of the son of the maid I will make a nation also, because he is your descendant.”

God is giving Abraham reassurance regarding the future of Ishmael. Though Abraham will no longer be able to take care of him, God will. The promise recorded in Genesis 21:13 reiterates the promise that God made to Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 17:20.

Genesis 17:20, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

Genesis 17:20 records God’s promise to Abraham that Ishmael would become the father of **“twelve princes”** which would comprise the “nation” referred to in Genesis 21:13 and 18, which would be the Arabs. This nation, which would originate from twelve princes, corresponds to the nation of Israel, which originated from the twelve sons of Jacob whose great grandfather was Abraham.

The statement **“because he (Ishmael) is your descendant,”** means that God would bless Ishmael because of Abraham and not because of anything meritorious in Ishmael.

So we see in Genesis 21:11-12 that Abraham is all emotional and upset because Sarah wants him to remove Ishmael, his seventeen year old son from their home because he was mocking the three year old Isaac. Then we see in Genesis 21:12-13 that God assures Abraham that he will take care of Ishmael and prosper him and tells him to do what Sarah demanded and send Ishmael away. Abraham has to now make a decision to either obey God or to disobey him.

Abraham is being taught by God the spiritual principle that one must set aside one’s emotions and feelings for family members in order to do the will of God.

Luke 14:27, “If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

Genesis 21:14, “So Abraham rose early in the morning and took bread and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar, putting them on her shoulder, and gave her the boy, and sent her away. And she departed and wandered about in the wilderness of Beersheba.”

Genesis 21:14 records that Abraham set aside his affection for his first-born son Ishmael in order to do God’s will. Abraham’s experience here in Genesis 21 of sending away Ishmael prepares him for another test, which is recorded in Genesis 22 where God commands Abraham to sacrifice Isaac in order to test his obedience and love for God. Abraham learned how to set aside his emotions in order to obey the will of God in a situation that did not seem to make sense.

Genesis 21:14 records that Abraham did not waste any time or procrastinate in any way in doing God’s will since it says that he arose early the next morning and obey God’s command to send Isaac away. Abraham’s obedience to the will of God demonstrates his faith in the Lord meaning that he took God at His Word and trusted that God would do as He promised.

In view of Abraham’s great wealth, it appears stingy of him to provide Hagar and Ishmael with only some bread and skin of water as they departed for the desert but this actually demonstrates Abraham’s faith in that the Lord would take care of the two.

Also, Hagar who became a believer eighteen years before, which is recorded in Genesis 16, must learn to trust in the Lord as well and would supply her and her son’s needs.

A skin of water would hold approximately 3 gallons. Abraham gave them enough provision to last until they reached the next settlement, which according to archaeological studies indicates that there were many settlements in the vicinity of Beersheba.

The statement **“she (Hagar)...wander about in the desert of Beersheba”** indicates that Hagar got lost.

The name “**Beersheba**” means, “well of seven” and was located in the flat southern part of the Negev, which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

The occasion in which it received its name is recorded in Genesis 21:28-31 where Abimelech’s servants seized a well that Abraham’s servants had dug and to settle this dispute Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs from his flock. He then asked Abimelech to accept the animals as a witness that the patriarch had dug the well, which was in question. Both men swore an oath there and consequently, the place was called “Beersheba” meaning the “well of seven” or “well of oath.”

Genesis 20 and 21:22-34 indicates clearly that Abraham was living in Gerar at this particular time in the narrative, which was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines. Therefore, it appears that Hagar is moving in a southeasterly direction toward northern Arabia, later inhabited by some of the Ishmaelites (cf. Genesis 25:12-18).

Genesis 21:15-21 records God delivering Hagar and Ishmael from the desert of Beersheba.

Genesis 21:15, “When the water in the skin was used up (3 gallons), she left the boy under one of the bushes.”

The statement that “**she (Hagar) left the boy (Ishmael) under one of the bushes**” suggests that Hagar was in despair anticipating that her son would soon die from the heat and lack of water. Notice that Hagar hasn’t really abandoned Ishmael since she does not leave him out in the hot midday Middle Eastern sun but rather she puts him under the shade of a bush.

Genesis 21:16

“Then she went and sat down opposite him, about a bowshot away, for she said, ‘Do not let me see the boy die.’ And she sat opposite him, and lifted up her voice and wept.”

The statement “**she (Hagar) went and sat down opposite him (Ishmael), about a bowshot away**”

draws attention to her inward feelings of isolation, loneliness and despair.

Obviously, Hagar is emotional and is not thinking clearly and is acting irrational as indicated in the contradiction between her actions and her statement to God, “**do not let me see the boy die**” since one can see much farther than bowshot range. She cannot think rationally and has failed to take God into consideration, who delivered her before the birth of Ishmael.

Genesis 21:17, “God heard the lad crying; and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, ‘What is the matter with you, Hagar? Do not fear, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is.’”

“**God**” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God has sovereignly determined to intervene in the life of Hagar and Ishmael again and deliver them from their adversity in the desert.

The covenant name *Yahweh*, “**Lord**” is not used here since Hagar and Ishmael have been given no inheritance by God under the covenant that God made with Abraham, which is confirmed by Genesis 17:19-20.

The statement “**God heard the lad crying**,” does not mean that God heard Ishmael’s prayer and not Hagar’s rather it emphasizes that God is acting upon His promise to Abraham concerning Ishmael, which is recorded in Genesis 21:13.

“**The angel of God**” is a reference to an appearance of the “preincarnate” Christ, which is called by theologians a “theophany,” or “Christophany.”

God who is omniscient asks this question of Hagar not to solicit information regarding her situation but rather because He wanted to bring her back to reality and to get her stop crying and think rationally again. He wanted her to know that He cares and also He wanted to arouse in her an awareness that her crying has not changed her circumstances, nor did it remove responsibility to her son.

Instead of getting all emotional and crying and abandoning her son in despair, Hagar should have been recalling how God eighteen years before delivered her in the wilderness of Shur when she

was pregnant with Ishmael after being sent away by Abraham and Sarah (see Genesis 16:7-13).

Genesis 16:13, "Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, 'You are a God who sees'; for she said, 'Indeed, here in this place, I have looked at and accepted the revelation and message of the One who sees.'"

Hagar's experience with the Lord in the past should have caused her to turn to Him again but she does not since she is trying to solve her problems without the help of God.

Genesis 21:18, "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him by the hand, for I will make a great nation of him."

The promise of Genesis 21:18 would give Hagar reassurance regarding the future of Ishmael and reiterates the promise that God made to Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 21:13 and Genesis 17:20.

Genesis 17:20, "As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation."

Genesis 21:19, "Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the skin with water and gave the lad a drink."

When it says that "God opened her (Hagar's) eyes and she saw a well of water," it does "not" mean that God miraculously made the well appear but rather, He simply called her attention to the well of water, which was there all the time she was sitting crying and had overlooked because she was so emotional. God had revealed Himself again to Hagar as compassionate and faithful and now she must respond in faith to this revelation and she does.

In faith she must take Ishmael by the hand as God commanded in Genesis 21:18 and as soon as she obeyed God, God opened up her eyes and she saw the well of water. Prior to this intervention by the preincarnate Christ, Hagar was not walking by means of faith but rather by sight as demonstrated by her tears.

2 Corinthians 5:7, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

Her faith would have protected her from the flaming arrows of the kingdom of darkness, which come in the form of discouragement in the midst of adversity.

Ephesians 6:16, "In addition to everything, I solemnly charge all of you to take up for yourselves your shield, which is your faith because that will enable all of you to extinguish all the flaming arrows originating from the evil one."

Genesis 21:15-19 reveals that God hears and sees the distress and affliction of believers and cares for them and delivers them from every adversity.

Psalms 34:17, "The righteous cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Genesis 21:20-21 records a summary of Ishmael's career.

Genesis 21:20, "God was with the lad, and he grew; and he lived in the wilderness and became an archer."

The statement "God was with the lad" does "not" imply that Ishmael was a believer but rather it emphasizes God's sovereign care to fulfill His promises to Abraham regarding Ishmael, which are recorded in Genesis 17:20 and 21:13. The fact that Ishmael was an excellent archer and lived in the wilderness indicates he provided food for his family as a hunter and he had a fondness for fighting.

Genesis 16:12, "He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand will be against him; And he will live in opposition to all his brothers."

Genesis 21:21, "He lived in the wilderness of Paran, and his mother took a wife for him from the land of Egypt."

Genesis 21:21 records that Ishmael "lived in the wilderness of Paran," which was located in the north central part of the Sinai Peninsula. Since Hagar was a single parent she assumed the responsibility that the husband would normally perform in finding a wife for her son.

Genesis 21:22-24 gives us the record of Abraham and Abimelech's non-aggression pact. Genesis

21:22-24 records Abimelech suing for a nonaggression pact in perpetuity with Abraham and Genesis 21:25-34, Abraham sues for a covenant with Abimelech that the king acknowledges and guarantees Abraham's right to the well of Beersheba. The two incidents are linked by Abraham's complaint about a well Abimelech's servants stole from him. Therefore, since Abimelech sought a non-aggression pact with him, Abraham was bold and felt free to set matters right about his claim to the wells he has dug.

Genesis 21:22, "Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, 'God is with you in all that you do.'"

The prepositional phrase "**at that time**" indicates that the events recorded in Genesis 21:22-34 took place at the same time the events recorded in Genesis 21:1-21 took place. Therefore, the departure of Hagar and Ishmael from the home of Abraham and Sarah and deliverance of the two in the desert of Beersheba occurred the same time that Abraham and Abimelech forge their treaty. So we see Abraham experiencing adversity and problems in his own home to facing adversity and problems with his neighbors and the ruler of the land.

If you recall, Abraham has settled in a place called "**Gerar**" whose ruler is "**Abimelech**." "**Gerar**" was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines.

The name "Abimelech" means, "my father is king" and is not a proper name but rather a title for royalty among the Philistines, just as the term "Pharaoh" and "Caesar" were. This is the second conflict that Abraham will have with Abimelech; the first was recorded in Genesis 20 and pertained to offspring and grazing right and Abraham's lie about Sarah being his sister.

Abimelech's statement to Abraham that "**God is with you in all that you do**" reveals the principle that even unbelievers, pagans can recognize God's blessings in the life of a believer.

Abimelech makes this statement as a result of his first experience with Abraham recorded in Genesis

20 where the Lord warned Abimelech in a dream not to have sex with Sarah and struck him with a disease preventing him from unwittingly committing adultery with Sarah. He also makes this statement because he undoubtedly heard of the miraculous birth of Isaac, as did everyone else in Gerar.

Also, Abraham's miraculous victory over the four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings recorded in Genesis 14, which delivered the Dead Sea kings, would have gotten back to Abimelech and his commander and impressed them. If you recall, Genesis 14:13-16 records that Abraham took only three hundred night rangers and the small armies of the Amorite princes in alliance with him and defeated the four armies of the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings. This undoubtedly got the attention of both Abimelech and his military commander once this information got back to them.

Furthermore, Abraham's possessions and great wealth would have greatly impressed the king invoking this statement from him.

Abimelech appears to look at Abraham with spiritual powers as Pharaoh of Egypt was considered to have had. He does "not" want Abraham to attack his army and people and therefore, seeks this non-aggression pact with Abraham. So basically what Abimelech is saying here in Genesis 21:22-23 to Abraham is do not use your supernatural powers to destroy my people and I.

From Abimelech's perspective, he did not ever want to go to war against Abraham since going to war with him would have meant going to war with Abraham's God! On the other hand, to have an alliance with Abraham was to have God on his side. No wonder Abimelech was so anxious to negotiate such a treaty.

Also, Abimelech's statement that God was with Abraham in all that he was doing was a rebuke and a lesson from God through this heathen king. Abraham had lied to Abimelech about Sarah because he thought that there would be no fear of God, and thus no protection of himself, in a land of pagans (cf. 20:11). God rebuked the unbelief of Abraham by this testimony from the lips of

Abimelech in that he declares that God is with Abraham in all that he does.

Abraham is considered a military threat to Abimelech's nation and the fact that Abimelech's military commander accompanies him to this meeting with Abraham indicates this is the case. The fact that Abimelech's military commander Phicol accompanies him to forge this non-aggression pact with Abraham indicates how important this meeting between the two men was.

Genesis 21:23, “now therefore, swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me or with my offspring or with my posterity, but according to the kindness that I have shown to you, you shall show to me and to the land in which you have sojourned.”

“Swear” is the niphal imperative form of the verb *shava* (ub[^]v*), which refers to putting oneself under obligation to someone.

Abraham was enjoined by Abimelech to swear to him by his God that he would not deal falsely with Abimelech or Phicol. Abraham responded by asserting that he would bind himself with an oath to deal with them honestly.

Abimelech's statement “swear to me here by God that you will not deal falsely with or with my offspring or with my posterity” is alluding to Abraham's half lie recorded in Genesis 20:2 that Sarah was merely his sister and never mentioned that she was his wife as well.

The fact that Abimelech wants Abraham to swear that he won't lie to him again is a rebuke from God through this heathen king regarding his lie to Abimelech that Sarah was only his sister and did not mention that she was his wife.

How would you feel if you were Abraham and a king and his military commander flatter you by acknowledging that God was with you in a very special way and then made you promise that you wouldn't lie to him any more?

Abimelech respected Abraham's God, but he was not so sure about Abraham's credibility. By putting Abraham on oath Abimelech sought to remedy the problem of Abraham's propensity to lie. Once before he had nearly lost his life because of Abraham's deception (20:3) and so he did not

ever want that to happen again. The lesson that Abraham learned from this was striking. He had feared for his life and for his wife among the heathen (20:11).

God showed him that Abimelech recognized his favored status with his God and that Abimelech would not have done him bodily harm on account of this. Therefore, Abraham got the message and would have recognized how foolish he had been to lie out of fear to Abimelech or any king.

The fact that Abimelech is concerned not only about himself but his descendants and their future indicates that he took for granted Abraham's continued success and that of his family.

Bruce K. Waltke, “The covenant is to endure in perpetuity, indicating that Abimelech believes that Abraham will have an enduring posterity. Nevertheless, it is no more reliable than any other human document. The next generation will turn hostile to Isaac and out of envy stop up his wells (see 26:15-31) (Genesis, A Commentary, page 299, Zondervan).

The statement “**according to the kindness that I have shown you**” presupposes Abimelech's actions recorded in Genesis 20:14-16 where he gave Abraham sheep, oxen, male and female servants and Sarah a thousand pieces of silver.

Genesis 21:24

“Abraham said, ‘I swear it.’”

Without hesitation, Abraham agrees to this non-aggression pact with Abimelech because he has no intention of attacking at any time Abimelech and his people. The irony of this is that Abraham's lie about Sarah was out of fear that Abimelech would kill him and attack his people.

Abimelech would have been shocked that Abraham lived in fear of him since Abimelech respected the power of Abraham's God. Abraham did not have much respect for the power of his God when he told Abimelech out of fear that Sarah was his sister.

Also, Abraham agrees to this non-aggression pact with Abimelech because he has a bone to pick with Abimelech since his servants have stolen a well, which he dug. Therefore, Abraham is going to use this non-aggression pact with Abimelech

has leverage to cut another deal with Abimelech, which would guarantee to his right to the well at Beersheba.

In Genesis 14:13, Abraham had a similar alliance with three Amorite princes, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre and was disposed to such alliances, as they contributed to a peaceful neighborhood.

The fact that Abimelech recognizes that God is blessing Abraham in everything he endeavors and has sought out a non-aggression pact with Abraham reveals how powerful and influential Abraham was in the Middle East at that particular time so that he was on a par with the mighty men of his day.

The fact that Abimelech sought out a non-aggression pact with Abraham also reveals the great reputation of Abraham and his power and influence in the Middle East, which was in fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy recorded in Genesis 12:2 to make Abraham's name great.

Genesis 12:2, "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing."

The promise "**I will make your name great**" refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God.

This fame and reputation is expressed throughout Scripture in that Abraham is called a "**father of a multitude**" in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God's confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

In Genesis 21:25-34, we see Abraham suing for a covenant with Abimelech that the king acknowledges and guarantees Abraham's right to the well of Beersheba.

Genesis 21:25, "But Abraham complained to Abimelech because of the well of water which the servants of Abimelech had seized."

"**Seized**" is the verb *gazal* (lz^G*) (gaw-zal), which means, "to rob, to violently take another person's possession."

The primary thrust of the verb is the loss of legal right, the unlawful seizure of one's rightful possessions. This seizure is usually characterized by violence and open affront to legal right. It means to take violent possession of something.

In Genesis 21:25, the verb *gazal* means that unbeknownst to Abimelech, his servants "violently took possession" of the well that Abraham's servants had dug. This would be considered an act of war on the part of Abraham or if Abimelech were the injured party, he would have considered it an act of war as well.

Abimelech's servants have prevented Abraham and his servants and family from enjoying free access to water for his herds.

Water was essential for survival and livestock and was a precious commodity in Abraham's day in the Middle East. Without the right to water, Abimelech's promise recorded in Genesis 20:15 to allow Abraham to live anywhere in his kingdom would have no value.

Genesis 20:15, "Abimelech said, 'Behold, my land is before you; settle wherever you please.'"

Therefore, we see Abraham's determination to guarantee the use of the well. Also, we must remember that Satan again is in the background attempting to manipulate events and destroy Abraham and Isaac. Satan is attempting to manipulate Abimelech's servants to provoke war with Abraham's people in order to kill Isaac or Abraham or both.

Abraham and Isaac are important to the plan of God since both are in the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ, the Promised Seed who would redeem mankind and destroy the works of the devil (See Genesis 3:15).

Genesis 21:26, "And Abimelech said, 'I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor did I hear of it until today.'"

Abraham catches Abimelech off guard here who states he was unaware that this had taken place. It is clear that after Abimelech's encounter with Abraham and his God as recorded in Genesis 20, Abimelech would never have ordered the violent take over of the well dug by Abraham's servants,

nor, would he have permitted it to take place if he was aware of it.

Lastly, Abimelech is initiating a non-aggression pact with Abraham as recorded in Genesis 21:22-24, out of fear of Abraham and his God.

Therefore, Abimelech was totally unaware of what his servants were doing.

So Abimelech neither knew the well was violently seized from Abraham's servants, nor did he know who did it. Neither had Abraham complained, nor had any other person carried the knowledge of the theft to him.

On the surface it appears that Abraham should have had confidence to approach Abimelech over the matter since Abimelech didn't want to mess with Abraham's God. But we must be aware of the fact that Abraham presumed that the king knew what his servants were doing and what was going on in his kingdom. So we must not get to down on Abraham.

It appears that Satan was attempting to use this anonymous renegade group of bandits to spark fear in Abraham again so as to manipulate Abraham. Nevertheless, the two men entered into an agreement that ensured Abraham's possession of the well.

Genesis 21:27, "Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them made a covenant."

"**Covenant**" is the noun *b^erith* (tyr!B+), which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other's behalf.

A foundational concept of a covenant is the notion of a legal contract. Legal contracts were developed to establish and regulate a relationship where none previously existed. Therefore, we see Abraham establishing and regulating a relationship between himself and Abimelech where one previously did not exist. This contract would establish and regulate a peaceful coexistence between Abraham and Abimelech and secure possession of the well, which was rightfully Abraham's since he dug it.

The idiom for establishing a covenant is "to cut a covenant." The likely origin of the phrase resides within the ceremonial act of slaughtering and

dismembering animals in the process of ratifying covenants. The implication of this act is a warning to the one who might break the covenant in the sense that he may receive a similar fate as the animal. The sacrifice of the animal would be deterrent from breaking the agreement since death would entail from such a failure.

By giving Abimelech sheep and oxen he is reciprocating somewhat since Abimelech gave Abraham sheep and oxen as well when he restored Sarah to Abraham.

Genesis 20:14, "Abimelech then took sheep and oxen and male and female servants, and gave them to Abraham, and restored his wife Sarah to him."

The animals would be used in the covenant ceremony (see Genesis 15:9-17). Notice that Abraham received male and female servants from Abimelech when he received Sarah back from Abimelech. Abraham kept these servants and of course had them circumcised and were evangelized by Abraham and Sarah and by the rest of their household.

Genesis 21:28, "Then Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves."

In addition to the sheep and oxen, Abraham gives Abimelech extra animals, namely, "**ewe lambs**," which are female sheep. The reason why Abraham gives the extra ewe lambs is that he wants more than a general agreement rather he wants a specific concession from Abimelech, namely the guaranteed use of the well that he had dug. The seven ewe lambs were not part of the traditional ceremony when making a covenant but rather were symbolizing a separate agreement. By accepting the seven ewe lambs as a gift, the king publicly acknowledges Abraham's ownership of the well.

Genesis 21:29, "Abimelech said to Abraham, 'What do these seven ewe lambs mean, which you have set by yourselves?'"

Genesis 21:30, "He said, 'You shall take these seven ewe lambs from my hand so that it may be a witness to me, that I dug this well.'"

The number of six in the Bible is the number of man whereas the number seven is the number of the divine and spiritual perfection. Therefore,

Abraham use of seven ewe lambs indicates his awareness of God's hand in all this, which has taken place between him and Abimelech.

The fact that Abraham uses seven ewe lambs indicates his awareness that although he had made a treaty with an earthly king, he recognized that God Himself had made an eternal covenant with him, to give him and his descendants forever all the land of Canaan, all the land from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean.

Genesis 21:31, "Therefore he called that place Beersheba, because there the two of them took an oath."

The name "**Beersheba**" means, "well of seven" or "well of oath." The name "**Beersheba**" bears witness to the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech and Abraham's right to the well.

"**Beersheba**" was located in the flat southern part of the Negev, which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

A verbal agreement of the covenant was not enough and was to be ratified by an oath and so we see that both Abraham and Abimelech take an oath.

Genesis 21:32

"So they made a covenant at Beersheba; and Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, arose and returned to the land of the Philistines."

In making the treaty Abraham gave Abimelech both sheep and cattle including seven ewe lambs. These secured Abraham's legal right to dwell in the land in peace and legally forced Abimelech to recognize that this well at Beersheba was the property of Abraham. Therefore, Abraham secured by treaty his right to the well.

Abimelech was now obligated to see that this well was protected so that Abraham and his people could use it exclusively. By accepting the gift and swearing an oath before witnesses, Abimelech was obligated to acknowledge Abraham's ownership of the well and protect it.

Genesis 21:33, "Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God."

"A *tamarisk* tree was a tall, shady tree that grows deep roots, required little water and is particularly suitable to the sandy soils of the northern Negev area" (The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis, page 149, Jewish Publication Society.)

The planting of a tree by Abraham at Beersheba is significant since it indicates his faith in the Lord and that he finds his security in the Lord. To plant a tree in Beersheba presupposed a constant supply of water and indicated a determination to stay in the region.

The planting of the tree by Abraham indicated his faith that the eternal God would bless and supply him with well water and that he was determined to stay settled in the land. The latter is substantiated in that Genesis 21:34 records that Abraham "**sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days.**"

Also, it is significant that in Old Testament Israel dwelling under one's tree was a sign of peaceful security (see Zechariah 3:10). Then we see Abraham calling upon the name of the Lord, which is the fourth time in Genesis that we see someone doing this (Gen. 4:25-26; 12:8; 13:4). Calling upon the name of the Lord is a reference to worshipping God in prayer.

"**Name**" is the noun *shem* (sv@), which is pronounced shame and refers to the authority, majesty, power, excellent character and nature of the Person of the Lord.

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal name of God emphasizing that He is the redeemer of mankind and is used in His relationship to His covenants or contracts with men.

Prayer is an expression of the believer's worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

Abraham is worshipping the Lord because he has received another revelation concerning the

character and nature of God, namely, that the Lord is faithful and is a God of unconditional love. Abraham responded to the Lord's love and grace in delivering him and his family from Abimelech and promising him the land of Canaan by worshipping Him.

“**The Everlasting God**” is *`el `olam* (la@ sl*w{u) literally means, “eternal God” emphasizing Abraham's awareness that although he made a covenant with an earthly king, he recognized that God Himself had made an eternal covenant with him, to give him and his seed all the land of Canaan.

Genesis 21:34, “And Abraham sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days.”

Later on history, “**the Philistines**” were Israel's greatest enemies during the period of the judges and early monarchy and it appears that they originated from the islands and coastlines of the Aegean Sea. They are also paralleled with the Kerethites, or Cretans, in Ezekiel 25:15f. and Zephaniah 2:4f. and Genesis 10:14 indicates that the Philistines descended from the Casluhites from Egypt.

It seems likely that the Philistines later were bound in slavery and submission in Caphtor, or Crete, from which God delivered them in the same way He did Israel in Egypt according to Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7.

The Table of Nations connects the Philistines with other descendants of Ham, such as the Canaanites (see Genesis 10).

The Philistines however, were not a single ethnic group, but rather a conglomeration of several different peoples from different origins and time periods. Therefore, the Philistines who originated from the Casluhites were different from the ones who descended from Caphtor.

In any case, the Philistines that Abraham encountered were ruled by a king whereas during Israel's period of judges and the monarchy they were ruled by five lords. The Philistines of Abraham's day are peaceful and reasonable as demonstrated by Abimelech whereas during the period of the judges and monarchy of Israel, they are highly aggressive warriors.

Genesis 22

Genesis 22:1-19 records God testing Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his beloved Son Isaac. In this passage, we have the ultimate test of Abraham's faith in that God commands him to sacrifice his son that he and Sarah waited twenty-five years to be born, namely, the son of promise, Isaac.

Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac typifies God the Father's sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ at the Cross.

Abraham loved the Lord so much that like God the Father, he was willing to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac and Isaac loved his father so much that like the Lord Jesus, he willingly laid himself down upon the altar as a sacrifice.

Genesis 22:1-19 records the seventh and final great crisis in the life of Abraham, which tested his love for the Lord, his faith in the Lord and his obedience to the Lord: (1) God commanded Abraham to leave behind his parents as recorded in Genesis 12:1 and Hebrews 11:8. (2) God commanded Abraham to live among the Canaanites as an alien (see Genesis 12:1-8; Hebrews 11:9-10). (3) Abraham's faith was tested in that he had to choose between living in the land of Canaan, trusting that the Lord would take care of him even though there was a famine in the land or leave the land of Canaan and go to Egypt. (4) Abraham had to separate from his nephew Lot as recorded in Genesis 13:5-18. (5) God commanded Abraham to send away Ishmael whom he loved dearly as recorded in Genesis 17:18-21 and 21:12-14. (6) Abraham's faith was tested in that he had to wait twenty-five years for the birth of Isaac and had to trust that God could deliver on this promise even though he and Sarah were biologically unable to have children together because of their advanced age (see Romans 4:18-22). (7) God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac after he waited so long for him to be born (Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-19).

The seventh and final test in Abraham's life demonstrates the spiritual maturity of Abraham since the number seven in the Bible is the number of spiritual perfection.

Also, when we view this passage, we must remember that Isaac was important to God too, even more so than Abraham since it would be through Isaac and his descendants that the human nature of Jesus Christ, the Son of God would originate.

Genesis 22:1-19 can be entitled “the testing of Abraham” and can be divided into three sections: (1) Genesis 22:1-2: God’s instructions for the testing of Abraham. (2) Genesis 22:3-10: Abraham’s obedience to God’s instructions. (3) Genesis 22:11-19: God’s approval of and reward for Abraham’s obedience.

Genesis 22:1, “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

“**After these things**” indicates that the events recorded in Genesis 22 took place after the events of Genesis 21. The events of Genesis 21: (1) Birth and circumcision of Isaac in Genesis 21:1-8 (2) The departure of Hagar and Ishmael from the home of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 21:9-21 (3) Abraham and Abimelech’s agreement’s with each other in Genesis 21:22-34.

“**God**” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God created Isaac and sovereignly gave Isaac to Abraham and Sarah, and thus Isaac in reality belongs to God and not Abraham and Sarah.

The statement “**God tested Abraham**” reveals to the reader that which Abraham was unaware of, namely, that God had no intention of letting Abraham kill Isaac. But rather God tested Abraham in order to demonstrate to the angels and men that Abraham valued his relationship with God over his relationship with his beloved son, Isaac.

“**Tested**” is the piel form of the verb *nasah* (hš*n*), which means, “to test through adversity in order to demonstrate a person’s character” and the testing of Abraham was designed to demonstrate that which was already in the soul of Abraham, namely, that he loved God more than Isaac.

Jeremiah 20:12, “Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart.”

The verb *nasah* does “not” mean “to entice to sin.”

James 1:13, “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”

This test was “not” to find fault in Abraham. But rather to demonstrate the character that God had developed in Abraham through the years of fellowship together.

James 1:2-3, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.”

1 Peter 1:6, 7

“In this (eternal inheritance and eternal security, see 1 Peter 1:3-5) you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials.”

“so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

This testing of Abraham would glorify God in the sense that God’s love for Abraham would be manifested in Abraham’s love for God since Abraham responded in obedience to God’s command to sacrifice Isaac because of God’s love for him.

1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first loved us.”

This testing of Abraham glorified God in the sense that it reflected God the Father and God the Son’s love for each other. This test that God put Abraham through was difficult for a couple of reasons. The obvious difficulty is that Abraham loved Isaac and the other was that Abraham had to deal with an apparent contradiction in the sense that God had promised Abraham that He would establish His covenant with Isaac for an eternal covenant for his (Isaac’s) descendants after him as recorded in Genesis 17:19! Hebrews 11:17-19 records that Abraham resolved this apparent

contradiction believing that God would raise Isaac from the dead!

Hebrews 11:17-19

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.”

“it was he to whom it was said, ‘IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.’”

“He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

Genesis 22:1, “Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, ‘Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

“**Here I am**” is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which expresses the intimacy between Abraham and God and respect Abraham had for God and demonstrates that Abraham recognizes and is responsive to the Word of God.

Genesis 22:2, “He said, ‘Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.’”

The imperative form of the verb *laqach* (jq^l*), “**take**” is employed with the particle of logic *na* (an*) and the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h), “**here I am**” in Genesis 22:1 in order to denote that God’s command to Abraham is a logical consequence to the attentive and responsive nature by Abraham to God addressing him.

So in other words, God is saying to Abraham, “Since you are ready to obey Me, take you son.”

“**Take now your son, your only son whom you love**” emphasizes the magnitude of this test for Abraham since God is commanding Abraham to sacrifice someone he loves dearly.

The word “**only**” is incorrectly translated since Abraham had many sons (Ishmael through Hagar, see Genesis 16; Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah through Keturah, see Genesis 25:1-2). Therefore, Isaac was not an “only” child.

“**Only**” is the adjective *yachidh* (rytly*) and means, “uniquely born one” and this interpretation is supported in that Isaac was a “miracle” baby since his mother was ninety years old and his father was one-hundred years old when he was born.

Furthermore, John 3:16 employs the adjective *monogenes* (monogenhv\$) translated “**begotten**” in the NASB and is used to describe God the Father’s Son, Jesus Christ as being uniquely born of a virgin.

Hebrews 11:17 employs *monogenes* translated “**begotten**” in the NASB but like the word in John 3:16, it means, “uniquely born one” since it is used to describe Isaac who was born to parents who were well past the age of having the capacity to procreate.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and Isaac was born of parents who were in their old age. Therefore, like Jesus Christ, Isaac was unique.

This is the first time the word “**love**” (Hebrew: `ahav) appears in the Bible, which is used here to denote the personal love and affection that Abraham had for his son Isaac and which love typifies God the Father’s love for His Son Jesus Christ.

The imperative form of the verb *halakh* (el^h*), “**go**” is employed with the lamed of interest *l* (l) and the 2nd person masculine singular pronominal suffix meaning “go by yourself” indicating that doing God’s will by means of faith is a lonely pilgrimage.

According to Genesis 22:14, the name “**Moriah**” means, “the Lord will provide” memorializing God preventing Abraham from sacrificing his son Isaac.

According to 2 Chronicles 3:1, “**the land of Moriah**” was the region around Jerusalem and was the place that God later appeared to David who built an altar to the Lord (2 Sam. 24:16-25), and Solomon built his temple (2 Chron. 3:1) and Jesus Christ died.

“**Offer him**” is the hiphil imperative form of the verb `alah (hl*u*) and 3rd person masculine singular pronominal suffix meaning “cause him (Isaac) to go up.”

The hiphil stem is a “causative” stem indicating that Abraham is being commanded by God to “cause” his son Isaac to ascend up one of the mountains in the Moriah mountain range typing God the Father sending His Son to the Cross.

The “**burnt offering**” portrayed Jesus Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross, which propitiated the Father’s holiness, which demanded that the sins of the world be judged.

1 John 4:10, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

This last command in Genesis 22:2 that Abraham receives from God “**Offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you**” echoes the first he received “**to the land, which I will show you**” that is recorded in Genesis 12:1.

Genesis 22:3-10 records Abraham’s obedience to these instructions.

Genesis 22:3, “**So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and Isaac his son; and he split wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him.**”

All that takes place in Genesis 22:3 has deep spiritual meaning and significance. Abraham typifies or portrays God the Father, who “**spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all**” (Romans 8:32). Isaac typifies or portrays the Lord Jesus Christ who was “**obedient unto death**” (Philippians 2:8). The burnt offering portrays Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross as propitiating the Father (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

Notice that Abraham does not procrastinate or consult with anyone regarding God’s instructions to sacrifice Isaac but rather he rises early in the morning to carry out God’s orders.

Psalms 119:60, “I hastened and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

In the Hebrew text, *waw*-consecutives precede the Hebrew verbs for “**saddled, took,**” and “**split**” implying that Abraham did one thing after another.

The significance of this is that Abraham cut the wood “after” saddling his donkey and gathering together his servants and Isaac indicating a battle was being waged in the soul of Abraham since it would have made more sense to cut the wood first. It appears that Abraham was postponing the most painful part of the journey till the last possible moment. Even though this was painful preparation for Abraham, he still obeyed God.

As Abraham was preparing to leave for Moriah, in his soul he was reconciling the apparent contradiction between God’s command to kill Isaac and the fact that God promised him He would establish His covenant with Isaac!

Hebrews 11:17-19 records that Abraham resolved this apparent contradiction believing that God would raise Isaac from the dead!

Hebrews 11:17-19

“By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son.”

“it was he to whom it was said, ‘IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.’”

“He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

Genesis 22:4, “**On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place from a distance.**”

Abraham was residing at this time in the land of the Philistines, in Beersheba according to Genesis 21:33-34 and Beersheba to Moriah was about fifty miles. The three days journey typifies or portrays the Lord Jesus Christ’s resurrection from the dead on the third day.

The raising of the eyes before seeing indicates that what is seen is of great significance and thus the moment of truth had come. The fact that Abraham raised his eyes indicates that his head was down implying that he was deep and thought regarding God’s command.

Genesis 22:5, “**Abraham said to his young men, ‘Stay here with the donkey, and I and the lad**

will go over there; and we will worship and return to you.”

Abraham tells his young men to stay behind since they would have misunderstood Abraham's motive for sacrificing Isaac.

Also, the fact that Abraham does not tell his servants what he is about to do typifies that the Cross was a transaction between only the Father and the Son and was shrouded in supernatural darkness, concealed from both men and angels.

Matthew 27:45, 46

“Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour.”

“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”

Abraham's statement to his young men that both he and Isaac are going to worship God and God's command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac indicates that worshipping God involves obedience to the point of sacrifice.

Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac and Isaac's confidence in his father Abraham and submission to him typifies or portrays the obedience of the Son of God Jesus Christ to His Father's will.

Abraham knew that God had a future planned for Isaac and that God wanted Isaac sacrificed and that God could raise Isaac from the dead.

The statement in Hebrews 11:19 that “**Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead**” indicates that Abraham's statement to his servants “**we will worship and return to you**” in Genesis 22:5 is “not” a lie but rather an expression of faith that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

Genesis 22:6, “Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together.”

The fact that Abraham laid the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac indicates that Isaac was “not” a little boy. Isaac was actually between thirty and thirty-three years of age, which is significant since

Jesus Christ was thirty-three when He died on the Cross and rose from the dead.

Isaac was between thirty and thirty-three years of age at this point in the narrative, which is indicated by the following.

First, Genesis 23:1 records that Sarah was said to be one hundred twenty-seven years old when she died, which was right after the events of Genesis 22.

Secondly, Sarah was ninety-years old when she gave birth to Isaac since Genesis 17:17 records that she was ten years younger than Abraham who was one hundred years old when Isaac was born according to Genesis 21:1.

If we subtract the age of Sarah when she died from the day Isaac was born we get thirty-seven years.

Furthermore, the term “**lad**” in Genesis 22:12 and “**lads**” in Genesis 22:5 is the Hebrew noun *na`ar* (ru^n^), which depending on the context can refer to a “child” or a “young man.”

The context of Genesis 22 indicates that the term refers to a “young man” rather than a “child” since Abraham lays wood for the sacrifice upon Isaac to carry, which is something he would not do if Isaac was a little boy at this time.

The fact that Abraham laid the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac portrays that God the Father laid a wooden Cross on His Son Jesus Christ to carry Himself.

John 19:17, “They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha.”

The fact that Abraham took in his hand the fire and the knife again indicates Abraham's faith in God and his belief that God would raise Isaac from the dead. It also portrays that God the Father sacrificed His Son Jesus Christ and could not have taken place without God the Father's consent and sovereign will.

The fire speaks of divine judgment and typifies that Jesus Christ whom Isaac portrays was judged for the sins of the entire world.

Isaiah 53:8, “By oppression and judgment He was taken away; And as for His generation,

who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due?"

Genesis 22:7, "Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' And he said, 'Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'"

Genesis 22:8, "Abraham said, 'God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together."

Abraham's statement, "**God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering**" is a prophecy that God the Father would send His Son Jesus Christ as the "**lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**" (John 1:29).

The fact that God commanded Abraham to perform a human sacrifice with Isaac also was prophetic in that it foretold that God the Son would become a human being in order to take away the sin of the world.

The statement "**so the two of them walked on together**" appears twice in Genesis 22:6 intentionally to demonstrate to the reader that Isaac went to the place of sacrifice of His own volition typifying that the Jesus Christ went willingly to the Cross in obedience to the Father's will and was not forced to go the Cross.

John 10:17, 18

"For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again."

"No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

The statement "**so the two of them walked on together**" typifies or portrays the intimate fellowship between God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ and that they were in agreement that the Cross was necessary for the salvation of men.

Genesis 22:9, "Then they came to the place of which God had told him; and Abraham built the altar there and arranged the wood, and

bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood."

"**Altar**" is the noun *mizbeach* (j^B@w+m!) (miz-bay-akh), which was composed of material constructed of earth and stones and was the place Abraham, was to perform this act of worship, which would portray the Father sacrificing Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Notice that Isaac does "not" resist his father Abraham when he is bound to the altar, and which binding revealed to Isaac that he was the sacrifice. The fact that Isaac didn't resist Abraham and did not open his mouth but was silent, like a sheep to the slaughter typifies the Lord Jesus Christ's silence, not opening his mouth and going to the Cross as a sheep to the slaughter.

Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

The silence and submission of Isaac demonstrated his total and complete confidence in and his total submission to his father, which portrays the Lord Jesus Christ's confidence in and obedience to God the Father.

Genesis 22:10, "Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son."

Abraham's intention to kill Isaac typifies or portrays the fact that God the Father put His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross and killed Him in order to provide salvation for all men and demonstrate His hatred of sin and love for sinners.

Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice someone as beloved to Abraham as Isaac demonstrated the extent to which Abraham loved God. Obedience is the supreme test of our love for the Lord.

John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will observe conscientiously My commandments."

One thing we notice in this story of Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac was that Abraham did not put his relationship with his beloved son Isaac between him and his relationship with God.

Luke 14:26, 27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac demonstrated that he was fulfilling the greatest command in Scripture to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Mark 12:28-30

"One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'What commandment is the foremost of all?'"

"Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.'"

"AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH."

"**Love**" is the verb *agapao* (a)gapavw), which refers to the act of honoring, respecting, revering and being dedicated and devoted to God to the point of self-sacrifice. This act is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to God's revelation of Himself since the believer has been created and redeemed for God's purpose and good pleasure.

Abraham loved God to the point of sacrificing someone that he dearly loved, namely, Isaac. Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice Isaac demonstrated his faith or trust in God. Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac was a magnificent demonstration and example for believers to follow after salvation in that it was a work produced by faith.

In the epistle of James, James teaches his readers who were believers that Abraham demonstrated his faith by performing works and when he speaks of works, he is referring to actions that are produced by obedience to God's commands.

James clearly teaches in James 2:14-26 that Abraham's obedience to God's command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac was a "work of faith," which justified him before God.

When he speaks of "**justified by works**" in this passage he means that Abraham's obedience to sacrifice Isaac justified him before God in the sense that he met God's approval.

In James, to be justified by works does "not" mean that Abraham had to perform works to be justified before God in relation to his eternal salvation. This is substantiated by Paul's teaching in Romans 4 where Paul teaches about justification in relation to eternal salvation meaning that Abraham was justified by his faith in Christ in the sense that he received eternal salvation through faith in Christ.

Romans 4:1-3

"What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?"

"For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God."

"For what does the Scripture say? 'ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.'"

Romans 4:1-3 is addressed to the Jew and Gentiles who were exposed to the Judaizers who taught that one receives eternal salvation by keeping the Mosaic Law. James 2:14-24 is addressed to believers challenging them to operate in faith "after" salvation and which faith is demonstrated by obedience to God resulting in good works that are approved by God.

When James speaks of salvation he is referring to the believer's deliverance experientially after salvation from the sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system whereas when Paul speaks of salvation he is referring to eternal salvation. Therefore, we see that James speaks of the "works of faith" in James 2 whereas as Paul speaks of the "works of the Law."

The "works of faith" speaks of works that the believer is to perform after salvation, which will be rewarded at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the Church (see Ephesians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15). The "works of the Law" speaks of an

unbeliever attempting to be justified before God and receive eternal salvation by performing human works.

James challenges the believer to obey God and put into practice the Word of God whereas as Paul is addressing those exposed to the teaching of the Judaizers, unbelievers who claim that eternal salvation is received by performing the works of the Law.

James 2:14, "What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?"

In the Bible, the term "**brethren**" is always used as a designation for believers and never unbelievers, thus James is addressing his readers as fellow believers in relation to their walk with God "after" salvation since they are already saved.

Therefore, the term "**save**" is "not" a reference to eternal salvation but rather the believer's "deliverance" after salvation from his sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system by obeying the Word of God.

The term "**works**" is "not" a reference to working for one's eternal salvation but rather it is a designation for obedience to God resulting in actions that benefit one's fellow believer.

James 2:15-17

"If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food."

"and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,' and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that?"

"Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself."

Remember, faith in God is demonstrated by obedience to God as was the case in Abraham obeying God in sacrificing Isaac. Therefore, in James 2:15-17, James teaches his readers that if they do not help their fellow believer who is destitute and in need of the essentials of life, then they are not operating in faith meaning they are disobeying God who commanded to love one another as yourself (Mark 12:28-31).

James 2:18, "But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.'"

James teaches that a believer's faith is demonstrated by his works and when he speaks of works, he is referring to his actions that benefit his fellow believer, and which actions are produced by obedience to God's Word.

James 2:19, "You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder."

James teaches his readers that the demons believe that God is one but they do not produce actions that are the result of obedience to God.

James 2:20, 21

"But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?"

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?"

Notice that James describes Abraham as "**our father**" thus he is referring to his readers and himself as believers, which Abraham of course was as well. Therefore, he is referring to the believer's walk with God "after" salvation rather than addressing eternal salvation.

Also, James teaches that Abraham was justified by his works. He then identifies what those works were, namely, the offering of Isaac his son on the altar, which was in obedience to God. Therefore, we can see that when James uses the term "**works**" in this passage he is referring to a believer's actions that are the result of obedience to God's Word.

When James uses the term "**justified**," he is "not" referring to justification in relation to eternal salvation but rather justification in the sense of *approval* by God for one's obedience to Him.

James 2:22, "You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected."

James teaches that Abraham's faith produced actions that were in obedience to God and which actions, he calls "**works**." When James uses the

term “**perfected**” he means perfected in the sense of being accomplished. Therefore, James is teaching that as a result of Abraham’s actions in sacrificing Isaac, and which actions were in obedience to God, the goal of faith was accomplished. The goal of faith is obedience to God.

James 2:23, “and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS,’ and he was called the friend of God.”

James is quoting Genesis 15:6. As we noted when we studied Genesis 15:6, although, the New Testament writers employ Genesis 15:6 to teach that justification is through faith alone in Christ alone, it does “not” mean that Genesis 15:6 records the moment when Abraham first got saved.

There at least three reasons for this. First of all, Abraham had already obeyed the Lord’s call to leave Ur and Haran (Acts 7:2-5; Gen. 12:1-5).

Secondly, the Lord had entered into a covenant agreement with him as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 and 15:4-5, which is something the Lord would never do with an unbeliever.

Thirdly, the perfect tense of the verb *aman*, “**believed**” demonstrates that Abraham’s faith did “not” begin after the events recorded in Genesis 15:1-5 since it represents the state of Abraham trusting in the Lord, which flowed from his initial faith in the Lord the moment he got saved in Ur of the Chaldeans.

Bible Knowledge Commentary, The Old Testament, “Abram’s faith is recorded here because it is foundational for establishing the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant did not give Abram redemption; it was a covenant made with Abram who had already believed and to whom righteousness had already been imputed” (page 55, Victor Books).

James 2:24, “You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

When James uses the term “**justified by works**” he means that a believer is justified before God in the sense that he is “approved” by God when he

produces actions that are in obedience to God. This obedience demonstrates his faith in God and does “not” refer to justification in relation to eternal salvation.

Abraham was a tremendous example for James’ readers to follow in that Abraham was approved by God because his attempted sacrifice of his beloved son Isaac was in obedience to God’s commands and which obedience demonstrated his faith.

James is not attempting to describe for his readers how they can identify a so-called “genuine” believer but rather he is simply challenging his readers to obey God, which demonstrates their faith and benefits their fellow believer.

Genesis 22:10-12 records God putting to a stop Abraham’s attempted sacrifice of Isaac, which was in obedience to His command.

Genesis 22:10, “Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

Genesis 22:11, “But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

Genesis 22:12, “He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”

“**The angel of the Lord**” is the “preincarnate” Christ and therefore a “theophany,” or “Christophany,” which are technical theological terms used to refer to a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). Genesis 22:11 records an auditory appearance of the “preincarnate” Christ, which is confirmed by the context.

“**Angel**” is the noun *mal’akh* (Ea*l+m^)(mal-awk), which means, “messenger” is used in the Old Testament with reference to “elect” angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the “preincarnate” Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1).

The context indicates that *mal’akh* in Genesis 22:11 is a theophany, an auditory appearance of

the preincarnate Christ since Genesis 22:1 reveals that God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and Genesis 22:12 reveals that God voices His approval of Abraham's obedience.

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that He involves Himself in and concerns Himself with and intervenes in the affairs of men.

In Genesis 22:11, we see the Lord involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Abraham preventing him from sacrificing Isaac.

The proper noun *Yahweh* is also the “covenant” name of God indicating that God was faithful to His covenant promises to Abraham that He would establish His covenant with Isaac (see Genesis 17:19).

The Lord's statement “**Abraham, Abraham**” is a figure of speech called *epizeuxis* or duplication, which means the repetition of the same word in the same sense.

Epizeuxis or duplication is a common and powerful way of emphasizing a particular word, by thus marking it and calling attention to it. In writing, one might accomplish this by putting the word in larger letters, or by underlining it two or three times. In speaking, it is easy to mark it by expressing it with increased emphasis or vehemence.

When the figure of duplication is employed it is calling special attention to the occasion or to the person and to some solemn moment of importance in the action or of significance in the words. Examples of this figure are found in many passages and I will give you two of them.

Matthew 23:37, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.”

Matthew 27:46, “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”

Therefore, the Lord's statement “**Abraham, Abraham**” is a figure of speech called *epizeuxis*, which calls special attention to the solemn moment where the Lord stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, thus ending the testing of Abraham.

“**Here I am**” is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which expresses the intimacy between Abraham and God and respect Abraham had for God and demonstrates that Abraham recognizes and is responsive to the Word of God.

Abraham expected a miracle but it came in a totally unexpected shape and form since he expected that he would indeed have to kill Isaac but that God would raise Isaac from the dead according to Hebrews 11:19.

Hebrews 11:19, “He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.”

The real resurrection would have to wait another three centuries when Jesus Christ would be raised from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-7).

The moment the Lord intervened Abraham saw with the eye of faith the day that Jesus Christ would rise from the dead.

John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

Even though God intervened, there still was a death and resurrection, Abraham's and Isaac's. Abraham died the moment he raised his hand to kill his son Isaac and was raised when God intervened. There was also the death and resurrection of Isaac since he did not resist his father Abraham and willingly laid himself down upon the altar to be sacrificed by his father and Hebrews 11:19 teaches that God's intervention in a sense brought back him from the dead. Abraham died when he demonstrated his willingness to give up all that he had and that which was near and dear to him, his son Isaac.

It had been a long process that started when God called him to give up his country, his people and his father's household to go to the land that God would show him. There had been a great leap forward when he believed God and his faith was counted to him as righteousness. It had found its

expression in the death of Sarah's womb and in his own body. The laughter at Isaac's birth had been the joy of resurrection but the final death blow had been this experience of giving up Isaac. It is so much harder to die and keep on living than to die and be dead.

The only way to possess anything is to give it to the Lord and receive it back from His hand, which Abraham was able to do. So Abraham died to self and lived to do God's will, which the Lord taught His disciples and practiced.

Luke 9:23, 24

"And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.'"

"For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."

John 12:24, 25

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

Abraham died to self also in the sense that he did not put his love for his beloved son Isaac ahead of being obedient to the Lord.

Luke 14:26, 27

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

"Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

This death to self meaning exchanging one's own will and desires (even legitimate desires) for being totally dedicated and devoted to doing God's will is called "identification with Christ in His death."

At the moment of salvation the church age believer through the baptism of the Spirit has been placed in union with Christ and positionally

identified with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session, which is called in theology, "positional truth."

Our position in Christ means that the Father looks at us now as He looks at His Son and that we share the same life as the Son. Our position in Christ means that God the Father considers the believer to have been crucified with Christ.

Romans 6:6, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin."

Galatians 6:14, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Our position in Christ means that God the Father considers the believer to have died with Christ.

Romans 6:8, "Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him."

Our position in Christ means that God the Father considers the believer to have been buried and raised with Christ.

Romans 6:4, "Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life."

Colossians 2:12, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

Colossians 3:1, "Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God."

Our position in Christ means that God the Father considers the believer to have not only been raised with Christ but also seated with Christ at His right hand.

Ephesians 2:4-6

"But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us."

“even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

“and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

The believer is commanded in Scripture to appropriate by faith his position in Christ, which will enable him to experience identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.

The apostle Paul appropriated by faith his position in Christ, agreeing with God’s view of himself that he was crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ.

Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

The apostle Paul died to self in the sense that he didn’t place any value on his pre-salvation distinctions as the top celebrity in Judaism because of his union and identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Philippians 3:2-3, “Beware of those dogs, beware of those evil workers, beware of the mutilation because we are the circumcision those who are serving (God the Father) by means of the Spirit of God, who are priding themselves in the nature of Christ Jesus, who have no confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:4-11

“Although I myself having confidence in the flesh, if anyone of the same race (i.e., Jewish) claims to have confidence in the flesh and some claim to have confidence in the flesh, I more.”

“With respect to circumcision: eighth day, descended from the nation of Israel, a member of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew (speaking Jew) from Hebrews (Hebrew speaking parents), legalistically: a Pharisee, zealously persecuting the church, self-righteously religious: I conducted myself irreproachably!”

“Nevertheless, what pre-salvation distinctions were assets for me, these I have come to regard as a liability because of the Christ.”

“Furthermore in fact, yes without a doubt, I continue to regard each today as a liability because of the incomparable knowledge pertaining to Christ Jesus, my Lord because of whom I have renounced all of them, even regarding all of them as piles of excrement in order that I might gain Christ-likeness.”

“So that I might be identified with Him, not by possessing my own legalistic righteousness, but rather faithful Christ-likeness, the divine righteousness based upon doctrine.”

“that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death.”

“If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones.”

Genesis 22:10, “Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.”

Genesis 22:11, “But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I am.’”

Genesis 22:12, “He said, ‘Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’”

A comparison of Genesis 22:12 and Genesis 22:1 indicates that God had no intention to let Abraham sacrifice Isaac but rather was testing his love for God, his faith in God and his obedience to God.

“**Fear**” is the verb *yare* (ar@y*) (yaw-ray), which does “not” refer to being afraid as a result of a threat to one’s life but rather in context, it means, “to have reverence” for the Lord and involves one’s total response to the Lord. Therefore, we see that the Lord tells Abraham that his obedience to His command to sacrifice Isaac demonstrated that he had reverence and respect for God.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “reverence”: “A feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration.”

Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that the phrase “I know that you (Abraham) fear God” teaches that Abraham’s obedience demonstrated his attitude of deep respect and awe for the Lord.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “respect”: “esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or trait, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or trait.”

Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that Abraham esteemed the excellence of the Person of God as manifested through His personal qualities or attributes such as love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, justice, righteousness, truth, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty.

Psalm 33:18-19, “Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness, to deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine.”

Psalm 34:7, “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.”

Psalm 103:11, “For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.”

Psalm 103:13-14, “Just as a father has compassion on his children so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.”

Psalm 111:10, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.”

Psalm 112:1, “Praise the LORD! How blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments.”

Psalm 128:1, “How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways.”

Psalm 128:4, “Behold, for thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.”

Psalm 147:11, “The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who wait for His lovingkindness.”

Hebrews 12:28-29, “Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”

The verb *yare* denotes one’s total and complete devotion to God. Therefore, in Genesis 22:12, the verb *yare*, “**fear**” denotes Abraham’s total and complete devotion to the Lord and the phrase to follow, “**since you (Abraham) have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me (the Lord)**” denotes this as well.

2 Corinthians 11:3, “But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.”

The phrase “**since you (Abraham) have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me (the Lord)**” indicates that Abraham held nothing back from the Lord but loved the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind and strength.

Mark 12:30, “AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.”

“**Love**” is the verb *agapao* (a)gapavw), which refers to the act of honoring, respecting, revering and being dedicated and devoted to God to the point of self-sacrifice. This act is the proper, appropriate, obedient and obligatory response by the believer to God’s revelation of Himself since the believer has been created and redeemed for God’s purpose and good pleasure.

Abraham loved God to the point of sacrificing someone that he dearly loved, namely, Isaac.

The phrase “**since you (Abraham) have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me (the Lord)**” indicates that Abraham’s did not put his relationship with his beloved son Isaac between him and his obedience to God.

Luke 14:26, 27

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.”

“Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

The Lord’s statement “**I know that you (Abraham) fear God**” does “not” mean that the Lord learned that Abraham revered and respected Him by being obedient to Him since the Lord is omniscient.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible, thus, the Lord has all knowledge of every event in Abraham’s life.

The Lord’s statement “**I know that you (Abraham) fear God**” means that Abraham’s reverence and respect for the Lord was manifested by his obedience to God’s command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac.

The question that begs to be asked is, “How can a God of wisdom, justice, and love command Abraham to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice?” Infant sacrifice was practiced by the Canaanites, but it was condemned by God (cf. Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 12:31).

Furthermore, such a sacrifice would have had no real value:

Micah 6:7, “Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams, in ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

To point out that God stopped Abraham short of carrying out the command does not solve the problem.

How could God have given the order in the first place if it were against His own laws? To hold that God could ever command His children to do wrong, even as a test, is to open the door to all kinds of difficulties.

Several factors must be considered to understand this test in a proper light. First of all, we must admit a strong bias in the matter. Those who are parents are repulsed by the thought of sacrificing

their children upon an altar, thus parents project their abhorrence upon God and suppose that He could never consider such a thing either.

Secondly, we view this command from the vantage point of the culture of the day, which did practice child sacrifice. If the pagans did it and God condemned their practice, it must be wrong in any context. We are forced to the conclusion that the sacrifice of Isaac could not have been wrong, whether only attempted or accomplished, because God is incapable of evil (James 1:13ff; I John 1:5).

Much more than this, it could not be wrong to sacrifice a son because God actually did sacrifice His Son Jesus Christ. In this sense, God did not require Abraham to do anything that He Himself would not do. Indeed, the command to Abraham was intended to foreshadow what He would do centuries later on the cross of Calvary.

Only by understanding the typological significance of the “sacrifice of Isaac” can we grasp the fact that God’s command was holy and just and pure. Abraham’s willingness to give up his only son humanly illustrated the love of God for man, which caused Him to give His only uniquely born Son. The agony of heart experienced by Abraham reflected the heart of the Father at the suffering of His Son. The obedience of Isaac typified the submission of the Son to the will of the Father (cf. Matthew 26:39, 42).

A second difficulty pertains to the silence of Abraham meaning, “How come Abraham interceded with God for Sodom, but not for his son Isaac?” We must remember that the Scriptures are selective in what they report, choosing to omit what is not essential to the development of the argument of the passage (cf. John 20:30-31; 21:25).

In this chapter of Genesis, for example, we know that God was to indicate the particular place to “sacrifice” Isaac (verse 2) and that Abraham went to this spot (verse 9), but we are not told when God revealed this to him.

Moses, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, omitted Abraham’s initial reaction to God’s command in order to highlight his ultimate response, which was obedience.

Personally (although there is no Scripture to support my conjecture), I believe that Abraham interceded for the life of his son, but God chose not to record this point in Abraham's life because it would have had little to inspire us.

I know that many of us would not want God to report our first reactions to unpleasant situations either and in the end it is our final response that matters (cf. Matthew 21:28-31).

Also, why did God halt the sacrifice? God halted the sacrifice of Isaac for two reasons. First, such a sacrifice would have no benefit for others. The lamb must be **“without blemish,”** without sin, innocent (cf. Isaiah 53:9). This is the truth which Micah implied (6:7).

Second, Abraham's faith was amply evidenced by the fact that he was fully intending to carry out the will of God. We have no question in our mind that had God not intervened, Isaac would have been sacrificed. In attitude Isaac had already been sacrificed, so the act was unnecessary.

Genesis 22:13-14 records the Lord providing Abraham a ram in place of Isaac as the burnt offering and so next we will study the significance of the Lord's provision of the ram.

Genesis 22:13, “Then Abraham raised 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 place of his son.”

The fact that Abraham was said to have **“raised his eyes”** indicates that he was looking down and concentrating upon Isaac who he was about to sacrifice before God stopped the proceedings.

“Looked” is the verb *ra'ah* (חָרַךְ), which means, “to notice” since the word “notice” implies becoming aware of something, which has caught one's attention. Abraham was so focused upon obeying God's command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac that he was not aware that a ram was caught in a thicket by its horns. It wasn't until God stopped Abraham from sacrificing Isaac that he became aware of the ram.

Also indicating that *ra'ah* means, “to notice” in Genesis 22:13 is that the interjection *hinneh*

(הִנֵּה!), **“behold”** marks Abraham's surprise that the ram is caught in a thicket by its horns and so we should translate it, “to his surprise.”

“Behind” is the substantive *achar* (רַחֲמֵי) (akh-ar) should be translated “that” since context does not indicate Abraham looked behind since there is no pronominal suffix (“him”) in the text but rather it marks the “direction” in which Abraham noticed something, namely, in the direction of a ram.

Therefore, the interjection *hinneh* coupled with the verb *ra'ah* and the preposition *achar* means that Abraham **“to his surprise noticed that.”**

“Ram” is the noun *ayil* (אֵייל) (ah-yil), which refers to a mature male sheep and portrays the Lord Jesus Christ as our Substitute who died in our place on the Cross.

“Caught” is the verb *achaz* (אָחַז) (aw-kahz), which is used in the niphal stem in the passive sense meaning that the ram as the subject is in a state of suffering the effects of being caught by an implicit agent, who is God as indicated by Abraham naming the mountain, **“the Lord Will Provide.”**

“Thicket” is the noun *savakh* (סַבַּח) (saw-vak), which is a tangled mass of briars and thorns found in a forest and portrays the crown of thorns that would be placed upon the head of our Lord and Savior by the Roman soldiers who crucified Him.

John 19:2, “And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and put a purple robe on Him.”

“Horns” is the noun *qeren* (קֶרֶן) (keh-ren), which portrays the power of God in the Person of Christ who provided salvation for all men since horns were the chief source of attack and defense with the animals to which God has given them.

Psalm 18:2, “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Luke 1:68-69, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant.”

1 Corinthians 1:24, “but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

“**Burnt offering**” is the noun *ʿolah* (hl*u{) (o-law), which portrays or typifies that aspect of Jesus Christ’s spiritual death on the Cross, which would propitiate the Father (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

“Propitiation” is the Godward side of salvation whereby the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God that the sins of the entire world-past, present and future be judged.

1 John 2:2, “and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.”

The spiritual death of Christ is recorded in Matthew 27:45-46.

Matthew 27:45, 46, “Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTHANI?’ that is, ‘MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?’”

Isaiah prophesied of the spiritual death of Christ in the Old Testament.

Isaiah 53:11, “As a result of the anguish of His (Christ’s) soul, He (the Father) will see it and be satisfied; By His knowledge the Righteous One, My Servant, will justify the many, as He will bear their iniquities.”

“**Anguish of His soul**” refers to the intense suffering of our Lord’s human soul as a result of being separated from the Father on the Cross and which suffering no angel or man will ever be able to identify with since no angel or man has kept themselves experientially sinless.

The ram that the Lord provided Abraham to sacrifice in the place of Isaac and save his life portrays the “substitutionary” aspect of Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross meaning that He died “in the place of” all men.

Although Isaac was an obedient son, he could not die as a sacrifice for sin since he was “not” sinless.

Therefore, God the Father provided His sinless Son as our substitute.

God the Father sacrificed His Son in the place of Abraham’s son and in the place of the entire human race.

1 John 3:16a, “We know love by this that He (the Lord Jesus Christ) laid down His life for us.”

Romans 5:6-8

‘For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.’

‘For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.’

‘But God demonstrates His own (self-sacrificial) love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died (as a substitute for all of) us.’

Romans 8:32, “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?”

Genesis 22:14, “**Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’**”

Abraham’s statement, “**The Lord Will Provide**” is a prophecy that God the Father would send His Son Jesus Christ as the “**lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world**” (John 1:29).

The fact that God commanded Abraham to perform a human sacrifice with Isaac also was prophetic in that it foretold that God the Son would become a human being in order to take away the sin of the world.

The statement “**the Lord Will Provide**” is prophetic in that God saw that sinners needed a Savior and that He would provide His Son as a substitute for them. His perfect Son would die in the place of those who deserved to die. He who provided the ram for Abraham to sacrifice in the place of Isaac would provide His Son as a sacrifice for sinners.

Abraham’s statement “**the Lord Will Provide**” expresses the fact that he looked forward in faith

to the coming substitutionary sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

John 8:56, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad.”

The mountain that Abraham named, “**the Lord Will Provide**” is Mount Moriah. According to a comparison of Genesis 22:2 and 14, the name “**Moriah**” means, “the Lord will provide” memorializing God providing Abraham with a ram to sacrifice in the place of his beloved son Isaac.

According to 2 Chronicles 3:1, “**the land of Moriah**” was the region around Jerusalem and was the place that God later appeared to David who built an altar to the Lord (2 Sam. 24:16-25), and Solomon built his temple (2 Chron. 3:1) and Jesus Christ died.

The main point of Genesis 22:9-14 is not the doctrine of Christ’s atonement for sin as portrayed by the ram and the burnt offering but rather it is the portraying an obedient servant of God worshipping God at a great cost to himself and in the end receiving God’s provision.

In Genesis 22:1-14 we see the greatness of Abraham’s faith where he was willing to obey God by sacrificing his son and it also reveals the greatness of Isaac’s faith in submission to his father Abraham. This passage also teaches that when we as believers come to a particular test that God has imposed upon us, God always helps us according to our needs.

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Genesis 22:15-18 records the Lord rewarding Abraham for his obedience to His command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac by reconfirming and enlarging upon the covenant He established

with Abraham, which is called by theologians, the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-18; 15:1-6; 17:1-8). Therefore, let’s review the promises of this covenant before studying Genesis 22:15-18 where the Lord reconfirms and enlarges upon this covenant.

The “Abrahamic” covenant was an “unconditional” covenant meaning its fulfillment depended upon the Lord’s faithfulness and not Abraham’s. The “Abrahamic” covenant included not only “personal” (Isaac and land of Canaan) and “national” (Israel) promises to Abraham but also contained the “universal” promise of eternal salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah. The Abrahamic covenant was originally established with Abraham when he left Haran and is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

Genesis 12:1-3

“Now the LORD said to Abram, ‘Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you.’”

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The Abrahamic covenant contained three categories of promises: (1) Personal (2) National (3) Universal and Spiritual.

(1) Personal: “**I will bless you and make your name great**” (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God.

This fame and reputation is expressed in that Abraham is called a “**father of a multitude**” in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God’s confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

(2) National: **“I will make you into a great nation”** (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the nation of Israel.

(3) Spiritual and Universal: **“And all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you”** (Gen. 12:3) refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind (Deut. 28:8-14; Is. 60:3-5, 11, 16) since it is only through Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19).

The phrase **“and you shall be a blessing”** is “not” a promise since the verb *hayah*, **“you shall be”** is in the “imperative” mood expressing a command and literally means, “so become a blessing” indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord’s commands.

The promises **“I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse”** refers to the fact that the Lord is identifying Himself with the cause of Abraham and guaranteeing protection for Abraham and his descendants.

In Genesis 13:14-17, the Lord enlarged upon the original covenant made with Abraham and specifically, made promises to give the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants, which is called in theology, the “Palestinian” covenant.

Like the “Abrahamic” covenant, the “Palestinian” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness. The “Palestinian” covenant was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant:
 (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan.

The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River. Deuteronomy 30:1-10 describes seven features of the “Palestinian” covenant.

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abram’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Genesis 13:14, 15

“The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, ‘Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.’”

“for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.”

The phrase **“all the land which you see”** is a reference to the land of Canaan, which is tract of land, which covers all Palestine west of the Jordan (Num 34:2-12) and whose western border is the Mediterranean Sea.

“Your descendants” refers to regenerate Israel and does “not” refer to the Arabs nor the church since only regenerate Israel was promised the land of Canaan.

Genesis 13:16, “I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can number the dust of the earth, then your descendants can also be numbered.”

The prophecy that Abram’s descendants would be as the dust of the earth was in a “near” sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a “far” sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

Genesis 13:17, “Arise, walk about the land through its length and breadth; for I will give it to you.”

Then, in Genesis 15:1-6, the Lord promises Abraham that his descendants would be

innumerable and that he and Sarah would have a son together.

Genesis 15:1-6

“After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, ‘Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great.’”

“Abram said, ‘O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?’”

“And Abram said, ‘Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir.’”

“Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir.’”

“And He took him outside and said, ‘Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be.’”

“Then he believed in the LORD; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

In Genesis 17:1-8, the Lord enlarges again upon the covenant He made with Abraham not only promising him that he would have many descendants but he would also be the father of many nations, which has been fulfilled in a two-fold sense: (1) Biological (2) Spiritual.

Genesis 17:1-5

“Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.’”

“I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly.”

“Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations.’”

“No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will

make you the father of a multitude of nations.”

The promise to make Abraham a father of many nations was fulfilled in a “biological” sense through Hagar and the Ishmaelites (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18); through Keturah and the Midianites and others (Gen. 25:1-4); through Isaac and Rebekah, the Edomites (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43); through Isaac and Rebekah, the Israelites (Gen. 12:2; 18:18).

The Lord’s promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a “spiritual” sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:15-29). This is how the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him “**all the families of the earth would be blessed**” would be accomplished.

The “Seed” God covenanted with Abraham found its fulfillment uniquely in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:16).

Genesis 17:6, “I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.”

The Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:6 that “**kings will come forth from you**” is a reference to primarily the kings of Israel (Gen. 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 17:7, “I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.”

The promise recorded in Genesis 17:7 “**I will establish My covenant with him (Isaac) for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him**” indicates that the Promised Seed, the Savior, Jesus Christ would come through the line of Isaac rather than Ishmael.

Genesis 17:8, “I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

Genesis 17:9-14 records the Lord giving Abraham and his descendants the ritual of circumcision to observe as a sign to ratify the covenant that He established with Abraham when he left Haran. Then in Genesis 17:15-22, we saw that the Lord promised Abraham that his wife Sarah would be the progenitrix or the mother of numerous nations and kings.

In Genesis 22:15-18, the Lord reconfirms the promises of this covenant and then enlarges upon them. Every time Abraham made a sacrifice for God the Lord responded by giving Abraham more: (1) God commanded Abraham to leave his hometown and as a result God rewarded him with a new one (Gen. 12:1; Heb. 11:8). (2) Abraham offered the best of the land to Lot and separated from Lot and as a result God rewarded him by giving him more land (Gen. 13:5-18). (3) Abraham gave up the King of Sodom's reward (Gen. 14:17-24) and God gave Abraham more wealth (Gen. 15:1-6). (4) God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac after he waited so long for him to be born (Genesis 22:1-19; Hebrews 11:17-19) and as a result the Lord rewards Abraham by enlarging upon the previously made covenant (Gen. 22:15-18).

In each case, where Abraham was obedient to God, God rewarded Abraham with a deeper and more intimate fellowship with Himself.

Philippians 3:10, 11

“that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death.”

“If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones.”

Genesis 22:15, “Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven.”

“**The angel of the Lord**” is the “preincarnate” Christ and therefore a “theophany,” or “Christophany,” referring to an auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

Genesis 22:16, “and said, ‘By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son.’”

The Lord’s statement “**by Myself I have sworn**” indicates that the Abrahamic covenant, which will be reconfirmed and enlarged upon in Genesis 22:17-18 is “unconditional” and “guarantees” its fulfillment.

The phrase “**declares the Lord**” expresses the Lord’s faithfulness in fulfilling that which He has promised, indicating that the Lord is “guaranteeing” the fulfillment of the covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants.

The reason for the Lord guaranteeing the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham is given in the Lord’s statement “**because you have done this thing.**” This statement refers to Abraham’s obedience to the Lord’s command in Genesis 22:2 “**Take now your son, your only son whom you love and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you.**”

The word “**only**” in Genesis 22:2 and 16 is incorrectly translated since Abraham had many sons (Ishmael through Hagar, see Genesis 16; Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah through Keturah, see Genesis 25:1-2) and so Isaac was not an “only” child.

“**Only**” is the adjective *yachidh* (rytly*) and means, “uniquely born one” and this interpretation is supported in that Isaac was a “miracle” baby since his mother was ninety years old and his father was one-hundred years old when he was born.

Furthermore, John 3:16 employs the adjective *monogenes* (monogenhv\$) translated “**begotten**” in the NASB and is used to describe God the Father’s Son, Jesus Christ as being uniquely born of a virgin.

Hebrews 11:17 employs *monogenes* translated “**begotten**” in the NASB but like the word in John 3:16, it means, “uniquely born one” since it is used to describe Isaac who was born to parents who were well past the age of having the capacity to procreate.

Jesus Christ was born of a virgin and Isaac was born of parents who were in their old age and so like Jesus Christ, Isaac was unique.

Genesis 22:17, “indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

In Genesis 22:17, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit employs two infinitive absolutes to express the fact that the Lord is “guaranteeing” the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham as a result of his obedience to God’s command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac.

“**Indeed**” is the conjunction *ki* (yK!) (kee), which functions in Genesis 22:17 as an “emphatic particle” emphasizing the Lord’s promise to greatly bless Abraham as a result of his obedience.

“**I will greatly bless you**”: (1) Piel infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) (baw-rak), “blessing” (2) 2nd person common (neither masculine nor feminine) singular piel imperfect form of the verb *barakh*, “I will bless” (3) 2nd person masculine singular pronominal suffix, “you.”

In Genesis 22:17, the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) means, “to bless in the sense of enduing someone (Abraham) with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that Abraham and his descendants were endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, the Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially.

The phrase “**I will bless you**” was fulfilled “temporally” according to Genesis 13:14-18; 15:18-21; 24:34-35 and it has been fulfilled “spiritually” according to Genesis 15:6 and John 8:56.

The infinitive absolute *barakh* stands before the finite verb of the same root in order to intensify

the certainty or force of the verbal idea expressing the certainty that the Lord would fulfill the promise to bless Abraham.

So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “blessing, I will bless you” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “I will greatly bless you.”

“**I will greatly multiply**”: (1) Hiphil (causative) infinitive absolute complement form of the verb *ravah* (hb*r*), “multiplying.” (2) 1st person common (neither masculine nor feminine) singular hiphil (causative) imperfect form of the verb *ravah*.

The infinitive absolute stands before the finite verb of the same root in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea expressing the certainty that the Lord would fulfill the promise to multiply Abraham’s descendants.

So to the English speaking person this construction literally means, “multiplying, I will multiply” but to the Hebrew mind, it simply means, “I will greatly multiply.”

“**Your seed**” refers to not only Isaac but also those who like Abraham exercise faith alone in Christ alone, which would include the church and regenerate Israel and regenerate Gentiles who lived in dispensations outside of the church age and ultimately it refers to Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the Scriptures teach that the “seed” of Abraham is four-fold: (1) Abraham’s biological or racial descendants, which would include: (a) The Ishmaelites through Hagar (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18) (b) The Midianites and others through Keturah (Gen. 25:1-4) (c) The Edomites through Isaac and Rebekah (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43). (2) Abraham’s biological or racial descendants the Israelites of Jews through Sarah and Isaac and Rebekah and Jacob (Genesis 12:2, 7; 18:18; Rom. 9:6-9). (3) Abraham’s spiritual descendants, which would include those individuals, both Jew and Gentile racially, who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (Gal. 3:6-29). (4) The Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16).

The comparative clause “**as the stars of the heavens**” echoes the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:5 and is used to compare the Lord’s

promise to Abraham to multiply his descendants with the number of the stars of the universe.

The promise of Genesis 15:4-5 not only pertains to Abram's "natural" progeny (cf. Deut. 1:10; 10:22; Heb. 11:12) but according to Romans 4 it refers to his "spiritual" progeny (cf. Gal. 3:29).

The comparative clause "**as the sand which is on the seashore**" echoes the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 13:10 to multiply his descendants as the dust of the earth and drives the point home regarding the Lord's promise to greatly multiply Abraham's descendants.

The prophecy that Abram's descendants would be as the dust of the earth in a "near" sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

The Lord's promise to Abraham that "**your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies**" is a prophecy that through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the great enemy of God and His people would be defeated, namely, Satan, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 (see Colossians 2:15; Philippians 2:6-11; Ephesians 1:15-22).

In the ancient world, to "possess the gate" of one's enemies was to have access to a walled city and possessing control of the city.

The term "**enemies**" refers to Satan and the kingdom of darkness who at the present time temporarily rule this world (Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 5:19; Rev. 12:10).

The Lord Jesus Christ has defeated Satan with His death and resurrection and at His Second Advent, He with His church, and the elect angels will imprison Satan and the fallen angels and assume control over planet earth for a thousand years (see Revelation 19:1-20:6).

In another sense, this prophecy also refers to the fact that regenerate Israel will be delivered by Jesus Christ from the armies of the hostile Gentile nations and antichrist during Daniel's seventieth week and will become head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ (see Zechariah 14:16-21).

Genesis 22:18, "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."

"**Your seed**" is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord statement that "**in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**" echoes the Lord's promise in Genesis 18:18 and is an enlargement upon the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham "**all the families of the earth will be blessed.**"

Galatians 3:8-14 reveals that the promise in Genesis 18:18 that "**in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed**" and the promise in Genesis 22:19 that "**in your Seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed**" are references to the fact that Abraham's descendent, Jesus Christ, would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

Galatians 3:13, 14

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, 'CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.'"

"in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The Lord states to Abraham that He will bless Abraham because of Abraham's obedience to His command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, which appears to indicate that Abrahamic covenant was "conditional" rather than "unconditional."

Now as we have noted many times in the past, the "Abrahamic" covenant was "unconditional" meaning that its fulfillment was dependent upon the Lord's faithfulness but we need to clarify an important aspect of an unconditional covenant.

An unconditional covenant which binds the one making the covenant to a certain course of action may have "blessings" attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient. That response is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God.

The blessings that Abraham received in Genesis 12:1-3 were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord's command to leave his country and his father's house and go to the land, which the Lord would show him, namely, the land of Canaan.

The "blessings" that Abraham received in Genesis 22:17-18 were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord's command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. The "fulfillment" of unconditional covenants does "not" depend on the continued obedience of the recipient but rather the faithfulness of God who instituted the covenant.

Abraham failed to operate in faith many times, yet the Lord remained faithful to the covenant promises He made to Abraham. The Lord was responsible to fulfill the agreement and Abraham's part was to obey the Lord's commands, which would manifest his faith in the Lord. Therefore, the "blessings" of the covenant were conditioned upon Abraham's obedience whereas the "fulfillment" of the covenant depended upon the faithfulness of God rather than Abraham's obedience.

Genesis 22:19, "So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham lived at Beersheba."

Abraham returned with Isaac as he believed he would since according to Hebrews 11:17-19, he reasoned that God would raise Isaac from the dead.

The name "**Beersheba**" means, "well of seven" or "well of oath" and bears witness to the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech and Abraham's right to the well (Gen. 20).

"**Beersheba**" was located in the flat southern part of the Negev, which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

Genesis 22:20-24 records the transition from Abraham to Isaac by presenting the family background of Rebekah who became Isaac's wife.

We have just completed a study of Genesis 22:1-19, which is the climax in the life of Abraham and

Sarah's walk of faith. Beginning with Genesis 22:20, we have the preparation for the succession of the patriarchs, namely, Isaac succeeding Abraham and Rebekah succeeding Sarah.

Genesis 22:20 also begins the third and final section of the sixth book in Genesis. Genesis is divided into eleven sections containing a prologue and ten books.

Genesis 1:1-2:3 contains the prologue and is the first section in the book of Genesis. Genesis 2:4-4:26 is the first book in Genesis providing the account of the line of the heavens and the earth-transition. Genesis 5:1-6:8 is the second book giving the account of Adam's line. Genesis 6:9-9:29 is the third book presenting the account of Noah's line. Genesis 10:1-11:9 is the fourth book providing the account of the line of Noah's sons. Genesis 11:10-26 is the fifth book containing the account of Shem's line. Genesis 11:27-25:11 is the sixth book presenting the account of Terah's line. Genesis 25:1-11 is the seventh book providing the account of Ishmael's line. Genesis 25:19-35:29 is the eighth book giving the account of Isaac's line. Genesis 36:1-37:1 is the ninth book containing the account of Esau's line. Genesis 37:2-50:26 is the tenth book presenting the account of Jacob's line.

Therefore, we can see from this outline that we are currently involved in a study of the sixth book of Genesis.

This sixth book has three sections: (1) Introduction (11:27b-32) (2) Main body (12:1-22:19) (3) Transition to the next section of the book of Genesis and generation (22:20-25:11).

Therefore, Genesis 22:20 begins the third section of the sixth book, which can be divided upon into five scenes: (1) Genesis 22:20-24 containing the genealogy of Nahor, including Rebekah. (2) Genesis 23:1-20, which provides the account of the death of Sarah and Abraham securing real estate in the land of Canaan. (3) Genesis 24:1-67 recording Abraham securing a bride for the son of promise Isaac. (4) Genesis 25:1-6 containing the genealogy of Abraham through Keturah. (5) Genesis 25:7-11, which records the death of Abraham.

This third and final section of the sixth book in Genesis prepares the reader for a shift from

Abraham's leadership to Isaac's and from Sarah to Rebekah.

Genesis 23-24 relate Sarah's death and Isaac's marriage to Rebekah whereas Genesis 25:1-6 we have the dismissal of Abraham's other children, leaving Isaac the sole heir and Genesis 25:7-11 records the death of Abraham.

Genesis 22:20-24 presents the genealogy of Nahor, including Rebekah, which is a "segmented" genealogy of twelve sons. The purpose of a "segmented" genealogy is to establish family relationships, whereas a "linear" genealogy aims to identify the final descendant as the legitimate ancestor of the first.

This genealogy is divided into two units: (1) Presentation of the eight sons of Nahor's wife Milcah (22:20-23). (2) Presentation of the four sons by his concubine Reumah (22:24).

Nahor, like Ishmael and Jacob, had twelve sons—eight by his wife, and four by a concubine. Since most of the names are otherwise known as those of tribes or localities, the list of Nahor's twelve sons actually represents a league of tribes linked to one another by a consciousness of kinship or by confederation. Such tribal federations were common throughout the ancient Semitic world.

The number twelve recalls the corresponding organization of the tribes of Ishmael, as mentioned in Genesis 17:20 and 25:12-16 and the twelve tribes of Israel.

The division of wife and concubine reflects relationships within the confederation itself. The "wife" tribes were more influential constituting the original core of the league whereas the "concubine" tribes would then have been later affiliates, subordinates who were absorbed into the confederation of tribes.

The genealogy in Genesis 22:20-24 completes the details of the descendants of Nahor and Milcah setting the stage for the introduction of Rebekah into the family line of the patriarchs (24:1-67; cf. 25:20).

Genesis 22:20, "Now it came about after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, 'Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor.'"

The statement "**after these things**" refers to the following events recorded in Genesis 22:1-19. According to Genesis 11:27, Abraham had two brothers, namely, Nahor and Haran.

The proper noun "**Nahor**" (נַחֹר) (Hebrew: *nachor* pronounced naw-khore) is sometimes spelled "Nachor" and means, "snorting."

"**Nahor**" was named after his grandfather (see Genesis 11:25) and this is the only instance in all the genealogies of Genesis 5, 10 and 11 that we see someone being named after an ancestor indicating that Abraham and Nahor's family were a close knit one.

Genesis 11:31-32 records that Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans with Abraham and did not take Nahor indicating that they remained in Ur of the Chaldeans. Haran died at a young age in Ur of the Chaldeans in the presence of his father Terah according to Genesis 11:28. Nahor founded a city, which is mentioned in Genesis 24:10 and is known in cuneiform sources as "Nakhur" and this city was situated in the upper Euphrates region in the Balikh Valley, near the city of Haran. The derivation of all these tribes from Nahor implies that the city was the original center of the confederation.

So when Abraham gets word about the children of his brother Nahor, this information was sent all the way from the city of Nahor, about a seven hundred mile journey north-northeast of Beersheba. This was a great distance in the days of Abraham and prevented all contact between Abraham and his brother Nahor.

Evidently, a traveler in a caravan train brought news to Abraham regarding his brother. This was no coincidence that this traveler ran into Abraham with information regarding his brother Nahor after so many years of having no contact with him. The Lord providentially saw to it that this traveler who is unknown to us ran into Abraham with this information regarding his brother since Rebekah who would eventually marry Abraham's son Isaac, was the granddaughter of Nahor according to Genesis 22:20-23.

The name of Nahor's wife is "**Milcah**" (מִלְכָּה) (Hebrew: *milkah* pronounced mil-kaw), which means, "queen" and she was Lot's sister according

to Genesis 11:27-29 and therefore, we see that “**Milcah**” was both wife and niece to “**Nahor**.”

The eight sons of Nahor through Milcah are distinguished from the four through Reumah by the statement in Genesis 22:20, “**Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor**,” which emphasizes the prominence of the eight.

The names of Milcah's children are specially recorded since it was only with this, the pure, legitimate, Aramaean branch of their family that the Hebrew patriarchs sanctioned intermarriages on the part of their sons.

Genesis 22:21, “Uz his firstborn and Buz his brother and Kemuel the father of Aram.”

The name of the firstborn of Nahor and Milcah is “**Uz**” (JWU) (Hebrew: *uts* pronounced: oots) whose name means, “wooded,” and whose descendants apparently settled in the Arabian Desert, west from Babylon and adjacent to the Edomites of Mount Seir. The land of Uz was the country in which Job lived (Job 1:1).

The second son of Nahor and Milcah is “**Buz**” (zWB) (Hebrew: *buz* pronounced: booz) whose name means, “contempt.” “**Buz**” and his descendants settled in Northern Arabia according to Jeremiah 25:23.

The third son of Nahor and Milcah is “**Kemuel**” (la@Wmq()) (Hebrew: *qomu’el* pronounced: kem-oo-ale) whose name means, “congregation of God.”

It appears that by adding “**father of Aram**” Moses was distinguishing this Kemuel from a leader in Ephraim (Nm. 34:24) or from the father of a leader in Levi (1 Chron. 27:17).

Kemuel’s son Aram, grandson of Nahor, should also be distinguished from Aram son of Shem (Gen. 10:22-23; 1 Chron. 1:17) and Aram, descendant of Asher (1 Chron. 7:34).

The name “**Aram**” (sr*a()) (Hebrew: *aram* pronounced arawm) means, “exalted.” This word is frequently translated “Syrian” or “Syria” and is used to speak specifically of the Aramean people who were a leading branch of Semitic people living in Mesopotamia and northern Syria (2 Sam. 8:5-6; 1 Kgs. 20:20-21). Isaac and Jacob both took

Aramean wives (Gen. 25:20; 28:5) and in fact, Jacob is called the “**wandering Aramean**” in Deuteronomy 26:5.

Genesis 22:22, “and Chesed and Hazo and Pildash and Jidlaph and Bethuel.”

The fourth son of Nahor and Milcah listed in Genesis 22:22 is “**Chesed**” (dc#K#) (Hebrew: *kesedh* pronounced keh-sed) whose name means, “increase.”

“**Chesed**” was the ancestor of the “Chaldeans” who lived in or near Ur in southern Mesopotamia, now modern Iraq, which was Abraham’s home town.

The fifth son of Nahor and Milcah listed in Genesis 22:22 is “**Hazo**” (Ozj&) (Hebrew: *chazo* pronounced: khaz-o) whose name means, “vision.”

“**Hazo**” is the ancestor of the region of northern Arabia known from Assyrian sources as “Hazu.”

The sixth son of Nahor and Milcah is “**Pildash**” (vD*!+P!) (Hebrew: *pildash* pronounced: pil-dawsh) whose name means, “flame of fire.”

The seventh son is “**Jidlaph**” ([d^y*) (Hebrew: *yidhlaph* pronounced: yid-lawf) whose name means, “weeping.”

“**Pildash**” and “**Jidlaph**” are unknown to us at this time.

The eighth and final son of Nahor and Milcah is “**Bethuel**” (la@WjB+) (Hebrew: *b^ethu’el* pronounced: beth-oo-ale) whose name means, “dweller in God.”

In Genesis 28:5 he is called the “Syrian” and is the father of Rebekah (see Genesis 24:50) who eventually marries Isaac.

Even though “**Bethuel**” is Rebekah’s father, he is overshadowed by Laban according to Genesis 24:50

Genesis 22:23, “Bethuel became the father of Rebekah; these eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother.”

Now, in Genesis 22:23 we have the focus of this segmented genealogy recorded in Genesis 22:20-24, which is “**Rebekah**.” The mention of “**Rebekah**” in this short genealogy sticks out since

she is the only female descendant of Nahor that is listed among the twelve males indicating that she was a dominating personality.

The name “**Rebekah**” (רִבְקָה) (Hebrew: *rivqah* pronounced: riv-kaw) whose name is related to the Akkadian *rabaku*, “to be soft or springy,” thus her name means, “soft, supple.”

“**Rebekah**” was a sister to Laban and a second cousin to Isaac whose father of course is Abraham.

Genesis 22:24, “His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah and Gaham and Tahash and Maacah.”

The name “**Reumah**” (רְמוּמָה) (Hebrew: *r'umah*, pronounced reh-oo-mah) means, “elevated.”

“**Reumah**” was Nahor’s “**concubine**” (פְּלִיגְשָׁה) (Hebrew: *pileghesh* pronounced: pee-leh-ghesh), which refers to the fact that she was a second-class wife, acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights (see Genesis 30:4; Judges 19:1-4).

Having a concubine was often a sign of wealth and was recognized as a status symbol.

The following men had concubines: (1) Nahor (Gen. 22:24) (2) Abraham (Gen. 25:6) (3) Jacob (Gen. 35:22) (4) Eliphaz (Gen. 36:12) (5) Saul (2 Sam. 3:7) (6) David (2 Sam. 5:13; 15:16; 16:21) Solomon (1 Kings 11:3).

As we saw in our study of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16, men and their wives sought concubines when the wife could not bear children. In these situations, wives presented their maidservants to their own husbands.

As Genesis 22:24 records, children of a concubine were not viewed as illegitimate but were considered part of the family. Three of Reumah sons, Tebah, Tahash, and Maacah appear to be connected to kingdoms or towns in the area today called Lebanon or Syria.

The first child of Nahor and Reumah is “**Tebah**” (טֵבַח) (Hebrew: *tevach* pronounced: the-vakh) whose name means, “slaughter.”

The second son of Nahor and Reumah is “**Gaham**” (גַּחַם) (Hebrew: *gacham* pronounced: gah-kahm) whose name means, “burning, flame.”

The third son is “**Tahash**” (טַחַשׁ) (Hebrew: *tachash* pronounced: takh-ash) whose name means, “dugong,” which is an aquatic mammal, having a fish-like body, flipperlike forelimbs, no hind limbs and a rounded paddlelike tail.

The fourth and final son of the concubine is “**Maacah**” (מַעַכָּה) (Hebrew: *ma`akhah* pronounced: mah-ak-aw) whose name means, “pressure.”

“**Maacah**” was forefather of the region of “Maacah,” which was located in the Northern Trans-Jordan, near Mount Hermon in Syria.

Genesis 23

Genesis 23:1-2 records Abraham mourning the death of his wife Sarah.

Genesis 23:1, “Now Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah.”

Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at death is recorded signifying her importance to the plan of God since she is the mother of all believers. She is also presented in 1 Peter 3:1-7 as an example for Christian woman to be obedient to their husbands.

1 Peter 3:6, “just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.”

Sarah’s age at death is recorded implying that she watched Isaac grow into manhood. Isaac was thirty-seven years old when Sarah died since Sarah was one hundred twenty-seven years old when she died and ninety when Isaac was born since Genesis 21:5 records that Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac was born and Genesis 17:17 records that Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham.

Genesis 23:2, “Sarah died in Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan; and Abraham went in to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.”

The name “**Kiriath-arba**” means, “the city of Arba” and was older name of “**Hebron**” according to Judges 1:10, Joshua 14:15, and 15:13.

“**Hebron**” was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

Genesis 22:19 records that after the Lord prevented Abraham from sacrificing Isaac, Abraham lived in Beersheba. Therefore, somewhere between Genesis 22:19 and 23:1, how many years we do not know, Abraham moved back to Hebron.

The prepositional phrase “**in the land of Canaan**” is inserted in order to link the story of Sarah’s death and her burial with God’s promise to give Abraham the land.

The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

“**To mourn**” is the qal infinitive construct form of the verb *saphadh* (רפ^ס*) (saw-fad), which connotes that of loudly wailing, or specifically, short cries or exclamations of sorrow for someone who recently died. The verb was connected with other practices of mourning rites, such as tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, a coarse and uncomfortable material worn next to the skin (2 Sam. 3:31), fasting (2 Sam. 1:12) and beating one’s breast (Isa. 32:12).

These actions were considered appropriate signifying anguish in the ancient world of Abraham’s day. The public display of sorrow indicated the communal and not just individual, nature of mourning.

Mourning for the dead began immediately at death, went on as the body was carried to the tomb, was observed at the tomb and lasted at least seven days after the burial.

“**To weep**” is the qal infinitive construct form of the verb *bakhah* (חכ^ב*) (baw-kaw), which refers to audible weeping.

In general, Orientals such as Abraham did not weep quietly but were inclined to loud weeping and lamenting.

The verb refers to Abraham’s emotional grief in mourning over the death of his wife Sarah.

Death is the sovereign decision of God based upon the integrity of God and omniscient knowledge of all the facts.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, “There is an appointed time for everything, a time for everything under heaven. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die.”

Psalms 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.”

Ecclesiastes 7:1b, “The day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth.”

The death of a member of the human race is not ruled by chance or fate but according to the providence of God. The doctrine of providence expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God Who reveals the purpose of providence through the work of Christ on the Cross.

“Physical” death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30).

At physical death, the unbeliever’s soul is separated from his physical body and goes to Torments, a compartment of Hades (Luke 16:19-31). The unbeliever’s physical body goes to the grave but is raised up at the Great White Throne Judgment (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15) and their ultimate destiny is the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:12-15).

The believer’s physical body goes to the grave at physical death and his soul and human spirit go to be face to face with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

2 Corinthians 5:1-10

“For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.”

“For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven.”

“inasmuch as we, having put it on, will not be found naked.”

“For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.”

“Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge.”

“Therefore, being always of good courage, and knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.”

“for we walk by faith, not by sight.”

“we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

“Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.”

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

The believer will receive a resurrection body at the resurrection of the church, which is called by theologians, the “rapture” of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.”

“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

“For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality.”

“But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY.’”

“O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR VICTORY? O DEATH, WHERE IS YOUR STING?”

“The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.”

“but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.”

Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross has freed us from the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14, 15

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

“and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

Physical death cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

Romans 8:38, 39

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers.”

“nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Death was designed by God to be your greatest testimony for the Lord in the pre-historic angelic conflict. Those who are grieving, bearing the sorrow, our grief should be an expression of our spiritual life and should honor those whom we love, those whom we stand by as they are being put into the ground.

The Lord promises to wipe away every tear from our lives caused by the death of loved ones.

Isaiah 25:8, “He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken.”

Revelation 21:5, “and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer

be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

We should carry a fragrance of memories of those who have died and gone home to be with the Lord. A funeral is designed to celebrate God’s victory over death, to pay our last respects to a loved one and is a reminder of the shortness of time on this earth. Life hangs by a very fine thread that can be snapped at any moment. A funeral should motivate the believer to use the remainder of his time on earth to execute God’s plan for his life to become like Christ.

Romans 14:8, “For if we live, we live because of the Lord and if we die, we die because of the Lord therefore whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord.”

Every funeral should have: (1) Decision (2) Gospel (3) Victory (4) Guidance for those left behind. (5) Conclusion to emphasize the importance of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone and executing God’s plan.

In Genesis 23:3-6, we have the first round of negotiations between Abraham and the Hittites in which Abraham requests a permanent burial site and in response the Hittites offer him their best tomb. The fact that Abraham seeks to buy a burial plot for Sarah, himself and his descendants manifested that he trusted in the promises that the Lord made to him that he and his descendants would possess the land of Canaan.

The Lord’s promise to give Abraham the land of Canaan is called by theologians, the “Palestinian Covenant.” The “Palestinian” covenant is in fact an extension of the “Abrahamic” covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-17 and 15:7-18.

Genesis 12:7, “The LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.”

Genesis 13:14, 15

“The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, ‘Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward.’”

“for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants forever.”

Genesis 15:7, “And He said to him, ‘I am the LORD who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.’”

Genesis 15:18, “On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, ‘To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates.’”

It appears that since the Lord delivered on His promise to give him and Sarah a child, Abraham trusted that the Lord would deliver on His promise to give him the land of Canaan as a permanent possession. Therefore, the fact that Abraham is attempting for the first time to purchase land in Canaan demonstrates his faith in the Lord’s promise to him to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan for a permanent possession.

The piece of land that Abraham seeks to purchase was in Hebron, which was a place of happy memories for both Abraham and Sarah. It was in Hebron, at the oaks of Mamre that the Lord promised Abraham and Sarah that Isaac would be born one year later as recorded in Genesis 18:1-15.

In fact, Abraham was residing at the oaks of Mamre in Hebron when he received the promises from the Lord as recorded in Genesis 13:14-18, 15:1-6 and 17:1-8.

The purchase of this burial plot in Hebron was the first step toward Abraham and his descendants possessing the land of Canaan. For this reason, Genesis draws attention twice to the rather obvious point that Hebron is in the land of Canaan (see Genesis 23:2, 19) and repeatedly insists that the negotiations and payment for the land were conducted publicly before the elders of the city.

The negotiations consist of three dialogues between Abraham and Ephron, the Hittite: (1) First round: Genesis 23:3-6 (2) Second round: Genesis 23:7-11 (3) Third round: Genesis 23:12-16).

The negotiation dialogues are followed by the narrator’s statements of an acceptance agreement and payment formula in Genesis 23:16, transfer of

property, including property description in Genesis 23:17 and witnesses.

The dialogue contract form establishes Abraham's impeccable claim to the cave and field of Machpelah.

The cave became the burial place for Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 25:10), as well as Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah (Gen. 50:13).

Each dialogue intensifies and becomes more specific in terms of participants and property.

First of all, we have the Hittites and a tomb followed by the people of the land and Ephron's cave and lastly, Ephron and his cave and field. The plot and style as well as the dialogue contract form demonstrate that the emphasis of the writer is not upon Sarah's death but on Abraham's firm and binding agreement of a burial site that will anchor Abraham's descendants in the Promised Land.

Genesis 23:3-4, "Then Abraham rose from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, 'I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.'"

The fact that Abraham "rose from before his dead" indicates that he was sitting on the ground as a mourner for his wife Sarah, which was the manner of those in the Middle East (see Job 2:8; Isaiah 3:26; Lamentations 2:10).

"The sons of Heth" is another term for "Hittite" and were descendants of Heth who was the son of Canaan (See Genesis 10:15), who were in possession of Hebron that Abraham was residing in at the time.

The Hittites were present in the land of Canaan during the time of Abraham according to Genesis 15:19-21 and they reached the zenith of their power sometime later and still possessed great power at the time of Solomon a thousand years later according to 2 Chronicles 1:17.

The "Hittites" would serve as witnesses to the sale of the cave of Machpelah to Abraham. The custom was to bury the dead one days time after the death and so we see Abraham wasting no time in securing a burial site for Sarah.

"Stranger" is the noun *ger* (rG@) (gare), which denotes an alien who has become a permanent resident without attaining citizenship.

"Sojourner" is the noun *toshav* (bv* =w{T), which describes someone who is a temporary resident.

"A stranger and a sojourner" contains the figure of hendiadys meaning "resident alien" expressing the fact that Abraham owns no land and ordinarily is not entitled to buy land.

The figure of "hendiadys" takes place when two nouns are used to express one idea or concept. The figure of "hendiadys" indicates that the noun *toshav* intensifies the meaning of the noun *ger* and changes it to an adjective of the superlative degree and so the expression *ger-w^ethoshav* should be translated, "resident alien."

A resident alien was a person who moved into an area where he had neither land nor clan ties and would be without traditional tribal legal support and protection and would be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

Abraham's statement to the Hittites, "I am a stranger and a sojourner among you" expresses the fact that Abraham recognizes that he has no legal right to buy property.

Hebrews 11:8-16 gives us further insight into this statement.

Hebrews 11:8-16

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise."

"for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

"By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised."

“All these (Abraham, Sarah) died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.”

“For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.”

“And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.”

“But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”

Genesis 23:3-4, “Then Abraham rose from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of Heth, saying, ‘I am a stranger and a sojourner among you; give me a burial site among you that I may bury my dead out of my sight.’”

Sarah was the first in the patriarchal family line to die in the land of Canaan. Abraham did not take Sarah back to her homeland for burial but rather he wanted her to be buried in Canaan as a testimony to both the people of the land and their own descendants that Canaan was to be their home from then on.

“Give” is the *qal* imperative (of entreaty) form of the verb *nathan* (/t^n*) (naw-than), which is incorrectly translated since these negotiations were done in a polite and dignified manner where Abraham was seeking to make a legal purchase of land from the Hittites to bury his dead and so it means, “please sell” (see Genesis 23:4, 9, 13).

Genesis 23:5-6, “The sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, ‘Hear us, my lord, you are a mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our graves; none of us will refuse you his grave for burying your dead.’”

“Mighty prince” is incorrectly translated and literally means, “prince of God” since the Hebrew expression is composed of the noun *nasi* (ayc!n*) (naw-see), which means, “leader, prince” and the noun *Elohim* (syh!la\$), which means, “God.”

Like Abimelech in Genesis 21:22, the Hittites recognizes God’s blessing and protection of Abraham and his family.

Genesis 21:22, “Now it came about at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, ‘God is with you in all that you do.’”

Abimelech’s statement in Genesis 21:22 and the Hittites’ in Genesis 23:6 reveals the principle that even unbelievers, pagans can recognize God’s blessings in the life of a believer. Both Abimelech and the Hittites acknowledgement that God was with Abraham were made because they undoubtedly heard of the miraculous birth of Isaac.

Furthermore, Abraham’s miraculous victory over the four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings recorded in Genesis 14, which delivered the Dead Sea kings, would have been known by the Hittites and impressed them. If you recall, Genesis 14:13-16 records that Abraham took only three hundred night rangers and the small armies of the Amorite princes in alliance with him and defeated the four armies of the Eastern Mesopotamian Kings. This undoubtedly got the attention of both Abimelech and his military commander and the Hittites once this information got back to them.

Lastly, Abraham’s possessions and great wealth would have greatly impressed the Hittites as it did Abimelech.

Notice that in Genesis 23:4, Abraham puts himself in the bottom of the social ladder among the Hittites as witnessed by his statement that he was a “resident alien” among them and the Hittites respond by elevating his status to the top of their social ladder by calling him a “prince of God.”

In Genesis 23:4, Abraham asks for a “burial site,” which is composed of: (1) Noun *achuzzah* (hZ*j| a&) (akh-ooz-zaw), “property, possession” (2) Noun *qever* (rb#q#), which means, “tomb, grave.”

In Genesis 23:6, the Hittites offer Abraham the “choicest of our tombs,” which is composed of: (1) Noun *mivchar* (rj*b+m!), “the best, something choice” (2) Noun *qever* (rb#q#), which means, “tomb, grave.”

Therefore, we can see that Abraham requested “a piece of property for a burial site” whereas the Hittites offered simply their “best tomb.”

The change of terms suggests that while the Hittites respected Abraham and were willing to grant him the right to bury his dead on their land, they were reluctant to give him a permanent possession there. Therefore, there is a snag in the negotiations between Abraham and the Hittites.

Abraham wants to not only buy a grave for Sarah but also wants to secure a piece of property as a permanent possession whereas the Hittites are willing to sell him a tomb but not a piece of property as a permanent possession. This reluctance by land owners in the Middle East in Abraham’s day to sell their property was a pervasive and deep rooted attitude through the Middle East.

Genesis 23:7-11 records the second round of negotiations between Abraham and the Hittites in which Abraham requests Ephron’s cave and in response Ephron offers his cave and field.

Genesis 23:7, “So Abraham rose and bowed to the people of the land, the sons of Heth.”

The fact that Abraham “rose” and then “bowed” to the ground before the Hittites indicates that the negotiations between himself and the Hittites were conducted sitting down on the ground.

Also, Genesis 23:10 records that these negotiations were conducted at the gate of the city where legal transactions usually took place in the Middle East (See Ruth 4:1-11).

The fact that Abraham rose and bowed to the Hittites after being called by them a “**prince of God**” demonstrates Abraham’s great manners and humility and signifies his gratitude towards their complimenting him and offering him a tomb to bury Sarah.

Genesis 23:8-9, “And he spoke with them, saying, ‘If it is your wish for me to bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and approach Ephron the son of Zohar for me that he may give me the cave of Machpelah which he owns, which is at the end of his field; for the full price let him give it to me in your presence for a burial site.’”

“**Approach**” is the verb *pagha* (UG[^]P*) (paw-gah), which means, “to go plead with someone,” and is used to denote the act of applying non-physical form of pressure. Therefore, Abraham is requesting that the Hittites act as mediators in these negotiations in order to put pressure on Ephron by speaking to him about selling the cave of Machpelah to him.

“**Ephron the son of Zohar**” was among the crowd of Hittites who had come to the gate of the city where these negotiations were taking place. The fact that Ephron’s father is named is rare for a non-Israelite and suggests that his father Zohar was an outstanding individual among the Hittites.

“**Give**” is the verb *nathan* (/t[^]n*) (naw-than), which is incorrectly translated since these negotiations were done in a polite and dignified manner where Abraham was seeking to make a legal purchase of land from the Hittites to bury his dead and so it means, “please sell” (see Genesis 23:4, 9, 13).

The name “**Machpelah**” means, “double” or “split cave.” “**Machpelah**” is located west of modern Hebron on the outskirts and the city is situated on the eastern slope of a narrow valley, which runs north and south and is surrounded by rocky hills.

Hebron was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

The cave itself was located at the end of a field and Josephus mentioned a “monument of the patriarchs,” which stood in Hebron in the days of Jesus. The cave of Machpelah is the world’s most ancient Jewish site and the second holiest place for the Jewish people, after Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The double cave, a mystery of thousands of years, was uncovered several years ago beneath the massive building, revealing artifacts from the Early Israelite Period (some 30 centuries ago). The structure was built during the Second Temple Period (about two thousand years ago) by Herod, King of Judea, providing a place for gatherings and Jewish prayers at the graves of the Patriarchs. This uniquely impressive building is the only one

that stands intact and still fulfills its original function after thousands of years.

Foreign conquerors and invaders used the site for their own purposes, depending on their religious orientation: the Byzantines and Crusaders transformed it into a church and the Muslims rendered it a mosque.

About 700 years ago, the Muslim Mamelukes conquered Hebron, declared the structure a mosque and forbade entry to Jews, who were not allowed past the seventh step on a staircase outside the building.

Upon the liberation of Hebron in 1967, the Chief Rabbi of the Israel Defense Forces, the late Major-General Rabbi Shlomo Goren, was the first Jew to enter the cave of Machpelah. Since then, Jews have been struggling to regain their prayer rights at the site, still run by the Muslim Waqf (Religious Trust) that took control during the Arab conquest.

Many restrictions are imposed on Jewish prayers and customs at the Tomb of the Patriarchs despite the site's significance, primacy and sanctity in Jewish heritage and history. Over 300,000 people visit the cave annually and is divided into three rooms and presently Jews have no access to the largest room, with the exception of ten days a year.

Abraham's statement, "**which is at the end of his field**" indicates that it is only a small portion of Ephron's property that needs to be sold to him and won't interfere with Ephron's activities or break up his property.

The fact that Abraham requests a specific portion of a specific individual's property, namely, the cave of Machpelah owned by Ephron, indicates that he had been checking out the area for the best possible site to bury his dead.

Abraham repeats his request "**for a burial site**" indicating that Abraham is insisting on not only buying a tomb but also a burial site or a "piece of property as a permanent possession."

The phrase "**for the full price**" is a legal expression signifying full payment for an irrevocable sale indicating once again that Abraham is not only interested in buying a tomb

but also that he wants to own the land in which the tomb resides.

Genesis 23:10-11, "Now Ephron was sitting among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth; even of all who went in at the gate of his city, saying, 'No, my lord, hear me; I give you the field, and I give you the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people I give it to you; bury your dead.'"

Ephron does not wait for the leaders to act as mediators and directly replies to Abraham's request. This direct response from Ephron demonstrates that he is selling the cave and the field of his own volition without any social pressure, making Abraham's claim to the property even more incontestable.

The phrase "**in the hearing of the sons of Heth**" indicates that the Hittites were witnesses to this transaction between Abraham and Ephron and indicating that these negotiations were proper and legal. As we have noted before, the gate of the city was the place that legal transactions between individuals occurred.

Now, notice that Ephron offers to give the cave and the field to Abraham as a "gift." This is important to note since a gift, as opposed to a sale, places the recipient under obligation to the donor. So if Abraham accepted the cave and the field as a free gift from Ephron, he could find himself indebted to him in other ways.

There is no indication that Ephron was being deceitful but rather simply was being gracious. Abraham did not think that Ephron was being deceitful either but simply wanted to buy the property rather than receive it as a gift so as to insure that there would be no legal problems down the road for him and his descendants.

Even though Ephron was gracious, Abraham wanted to make the transaction legal and irrevocable in order to secure it for future generations in his family demonstrating his faith in the Lord's promises to give him as a permanent possession the land of Canaan.

Genesis 23:12, "And Abraham bowed before the people of the land."

Once again, by bowing to the Hittites, Abraham expresses his politeness and appreciation as to the offer made by Ephron.

Genesis 23:13, “He spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, ‘If you will only please listen to me; I will give the price of the field, accept it from me that I may bury my dead there.’”

Abraham is aware of the importance of any agreement being public and attested by witnesses, so he, like Ephron, spoke **“in the hearing of the people of the land.”**

Again, Abraham insists that he not only wants to purchase the tomb but the field also and not receive them as a gift so that he and his descendants might not be obligated to Ephron or his descendants in the future. Abraham wants to secure the property for his descendants, which is a demonstration of his faith in the Lord’s promise to give him the land of Canaan as a permanent possession.

Genesis 23:14-15, “Then Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, ‘My lord, listen to me; a piece of land worth four hundred shekels of silver, what is that between me and you? So bury your dead.’”

Ephron accepts Abraham’s terms that the latter pay for the land rather than receive it as a gift. In a nonchalant manner, Ephron names his price as **“four hundred shekels of silver.”**

A “shekel” is worth about 65 cents, thus 400 shekels was about \$ 260. We do not know if this price named by Ephron was exorbitant or not. But according to Nahum Sarna, “three texts from Ugarit written in Akkadian and dating from the fourteenth-thirteenth centuries B.C.E., record real estate transactions involving a purchase price of 400 shekels of silver” (The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis, Nahum M. Sarna, Jewish Publication Society, page 157).

Abraham does not make an offer but rather lets Ephron name his price since “only a payment that is manifestly accepted by the seller of his own volition ensures the unchallengeable nature of the transaction...once that is done, there is no further bargaining” (The JPS Torah Commentary,

Genesis, Nahum M. Sarna, Jewish Publication Society, page 157)

Delitzsch makes an insightful comment regarding this transaction between Abraham and Ephron: “The bargain which is here made between Ephron and Abraham is to this very day repeated in that country. In Damascus, when a purchaser makes a lower offer than can be accepted, he is answered: What, is it a matter of money between us? Take it for nothing, friend, as a present from me; don’t feel under any kind of constraint! Dieterici had a similar experience in Hebron: ‘In our excursions we had noticed a fine grey horse belonging to the Quarantine inspector. Mr. Blaine, my fellow-traveller, had appeared to wish to buy the animal. It now made its appearance at our tents. We inquired the price, and our astonishment may be conceived when the dirty Turk offered us the animal as a present. Mr. Blaine declared that he by no means intended to take it as a present, when the Turk replied: What then are five purses (25 pounds sterling) to thee?’ Similar experiences take place every day in Egypt” (page 2:99-100 cited by Gordon Wenham, Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2, Genesis 16-50, page 129).

Genesis 23:16, “Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham weighed out for Ephron the silver which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, commercial standard.”

Ephron names his price and Abraham agrees to it without arguing or attempting to bargain with Ephron to bring the price down.

Whether the price of 400 shekels was fair or not, we do not know since we do not have enough knowledge of the price of land in Israel in the days of Abraham.

Ephron is well aware of how important it is for Abraham to gain unimpeachable possession of the burial place and therefore, knows that Abraham will pay any amount. Even if Ephron did overcharge Abraham, the price paid suggests Sarah’s burial ground was quite extensive, which befits the mother of the nation of Israel. Her grave was impressive, a worthy memorial to a great woman.

The phrase “**in the hearing of the sons of Heth**” indicates that the Hittites were witnesses to this transaction between Abraham and Ephron and indicating that these negotiations were proper and legal.

The expression “**commercial standard**” is composed of: (1) Substantival use of the verb *`avar* (rb^u*) (aw-var), “the current rate of exchange” (2) Distributive use of the preposition *l* (l+) (lamed), “among” (3) Substantival use of the verb *sachar* (rj^s*) (saw-khar), “merchants.”

Therefore, the entire expression *`over lassocher* (rb@u{ rj@S{L^}) means, “the current rate of exchange among merchants.”

After agreeing to Ephron’s price, Abraham calculated the weight of four hundred shekels of silver, which was according to the current rate of exchange among merchants in Abraham’s day.

In Genesis 23:17-18, Moses records the deed of sale.

Genesis 23:17-18, “So Ephron's field, which was in Machpelah, which faced Mamre, the field and cave which was in it, and all the trees which were in the field, that were within all the confines of its border, were deeded over to Abraham for a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.”

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on the expression “**deeded over to**” makes the following insightful comment, he writes, “In the Hebrew text, this word occurs first, a format precisely following the dialogue contract form. Literally, the phrase is ‘rose [and went over] to.’ That is, the deed ‘rose and went to Abraham.’ The detailed contractual form demonstrates that Abraham has an impeccable legal claim to the field in Machpelah. Goodwill, good faith, and sincerity exist between the three parties” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 321, Zondervan).

Not only was the field and the cave deeded over to Abraham as a permanent possession but also “**all the trees**” which were in the field were as well since trees were considered appurtenances meaning they belonged to the property purchased.

Near Eastern contract clauses use similar language as we have here in Genesis 23:17-18.

With this purchase of the cave in the field of Machpelah facing Mamre in Hebron in the land of Canaan, Abraham was renouncing Paddan Aram, that is, northwest Mesopotamia (cf. 25:20), which was brought to the readers attention indirectly by mentioning the relatives of Abraham in Genesis 22:20-24. Canaan was now Abraham’s new native land when he made this purchase.

Fascinatingly, the only piece of land that Abraham ever owned in the Promised Land, the land of Canaan was a burial plot. But this first property of the patriarchs, a burial plot, bound them to the land of Canaan so that there would never be a return to Mesopotamia.

Later patriarchs, such as Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob, would die and be buried with their ancestors in Canaan. Based upon God’s promise of land to his descendants, Abraham made plans for the future.

By buying the land for his dead, he was forced to realize that God’s promises do not end with this life. God will do far more than He has done in this life, which is the confident expectation of all who die trusting in the Lord.

In this life, the patriarchs such as Abraham and Sarah were sojourners but in death they were heirs of the promise and occupied the land. The patriarchs died not receiving the promises and yet they died in faith (see Hebrews 11:39-40).

God’s plan is for the patriarchs and all believers in every dispensation is to receive the promised rest (from sin and Satan) during the millennial reign of Christ.

This rest, the Sabbath rest spoken of in Hebrews 4:8-10 can be experienced to a certain extent in time through fellowship with God but will be experienced perfectly and completely during the millennial reign of Christ and in eternity future. God’s promises to believers are not exhausted in this life.

Abraham bought this gravesite in the land of Canaan in the confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise to give the land of Canaan to himself and his descendants as a permanent

possession. He died trusting that God would fulfill His promise and so we too must die in faith.

As Abraham had a confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise in the future for him and his descendants, so believers today are to be confidently expecting God to fulfill His promises of a resurrection body and rewards for faithfulness.

Our natural inclination is to mourn death as the world does but in reality death should be the time of a believer's greatest demonstration of faith because the recipient of God's promises has a hope and a glorious future beyond the grave. Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself referred to Abraham when discussing the resurrection with the Sadducees (see Matthew 22:31-32) and stated that God's promises demand resurrection.

Genesis 23:19 presents to us a summary of the burial of Sarah.

Genesis 23:19, "After this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field at Machpelah facing Mamre (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan."

Once the purchase had been consummated, Abraham proceeded with the burial of Sarah, the field and the cave had been secured, the bodies of the patriarchs and their wives would rest in the Promised Land until the day of resurrection. The field and everything in it was now Abraham's as a burial site and all the Hittites at the gate of the city were witnesses to this transaction, which made it official and a matter of record. Abraham now had property in Canaan, even though it was to be used as a burial site.

Not only was Sarah buried at this site but so also were Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there as well (See Genesis 25:9; 35:27, 29, 49:31; 50:13) and all of these demonstrated their faith in God's promises by being buried with Sarah.

This simple and terse statement in Genesis 23:19 without any descriptive detail, epitomizes the simplicity and lack of ostentation that have always characterized traditional Jewish burial rites.

The expression "**facing Mamre**" provides for us the reason why Abraham chose to buy this piece

of land from Ephron. The oaks of Mamre in Hebron was a place of happy memories for both Abraham and Sarah since there the Lord promised Abraham and Sarah that Isaac would be born one year later as recorded in Genesis 18:1-15. Mamre was about two miles north of ancient Hebron, which was on a hill to the west of the modern Hebron.

Genesis 23:20 presents the conclusion of Abraham's acquisition of the cave of Machpelah.

Genesis 23:20, "So the field and the cave that is in it, were deeded over to Abraham for a burial site by the sons of Heth."

This little piece of land gives promise of the whole land and makes clear that Abraham and Sarah were aliens and strangers seeking a homeland, which they will receive at the resurrection of Old Testament believers.

With this purchase of land in Hebron facing Mamre, Abraham wanted his descendants to know that he had believed in the Lord's promises. The presence of the grave site among his descendants in later years would be mute but eloquent testimony to them all that Abraham was sure that God would fulfill His promises. Consequently, the purpose of the passage recorded in Genesis 23:1-20 is not to show that by this initial purchase of one piece of ground Abraham secured possession or option on the whole. Rather, Abraham's title to the land rested entirely on God's promise to give him and his descendants the land of Canaan as a permanent possession and not upon a purchase and sale agreement between two human beings!

Genesis 24

Genesis 24 is the longest episode recorded in the book of Genesis and contains the record of Abraham securing a bride for his son Isaac. Having fulfilled his duty to the dead in Genesis 23, Abraham now turns his attention to the needs of the living. Abraham is concerned about a wife for his son Isaac since without offspring none of the divine promises will be fulfilled.

Sarah's death and Abraham's old age suggests the importance of securing a bride for Isaac to guarantee to him the covenant blessings of land and descendants. As we will see in Genesis 24, Abraham commissions a trusted servant to set out

for far-off Paddan Aram, which is northwest Mesopotamia in order to find a wife for his son from among his relatives. Abraham rejects the women of the corrupt Canaanites and relies confidently in the Lord to lead his servant in securing a bride in Mesopotamia among his relatives. As we will see the Lord providentially ensured the fulfillment of His promise by guiding Abraham's servant in acquiring a bride for Isaac.

Abraham prefigures God the Father who would secure a bride for His Son Jesus Christ (Mt. 22:2; Jn. 6:44; Acts 15:14; 2 Cor. 11:2).

Genesis 24 effects a transition in the book of Genesis from the cycle of Abrahamic stories to the Isaac narratives.

We have already seen Sarah depart from the pages of Scripture in the previous chapter and now in Genesis 24, we are prepared for the departure of Abraham.

There are five sections to Genesis 24: (1) Genesis 24:1 presents an introductory statement regarding Abraham's age to begin the chapter and demonstrates the urgent need to secure a bride for his son. (2) Genesis 24:2-9 records Abraham commissioning his servant in his household to go back to Paddan Aram and secure a bride for Isaac among Abraham's relatives. (3) Genesis 24:10-27 presents Abraham's servant providentially meeting Rebekah at a well in Nahor in Aram Naharaim. (4) Genesis 24:28-61 records that in the home of Bethuel, Rebekah's family consents to the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac. (5) Genesis 24:62-67 presents Rebekah and Isaac meeting in the Negev and as a married couple enter into Sarah's tent.

There are four characters who figure significantly in God's providential designs: (1) Faithful Abraham (2) Abraham's prayerful servant (3) Virtuous Rebekah (4) Rebekah's unscrupulous family.

Although, He is not mentioned, the Lord is the chief actor in this chapter.

Genesis 24:1, "Now Abraham was old, advanced in age; and the LORD had blessed Abraham in every way."

Genesis 25:20 records that Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah and that would make Abraham one hundred forty years old since Abraham was one hundred years old when Sarah gave birth to Isaac according to Genesis 21:5.

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord had involved Himself in and concerned Himself with and intervened in the life of Abraham so as to bless him and fulfill His covenant promises to Abraham.

"**Blessed**" is the piel perfect form of the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means, "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity."

The phrase "**the Lord had blessed Abraham in every way**" indicates that the Lord's promises to bless Abraham recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 7, 13:14-18, 15:1-6, 18-21, 17:1-8 and 18:1-8 are now proclaimed as being fulfilled even though some blessings remain to be fulfilled in the future.

The Lord blessed Abraham in a five-fold sense:

- (1) The Lord blessed Abraham spiritually in that Abraham enjoyed intimate fellowship with the Lord so much so that the Scriptures call Abraham, the "**friend of God**" (James 2:23).
- (2) The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord gave him a beautiful wife, Sarah, who he was married to for over sixty years.
- (3) The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord fulfilled His promise to give Abraham and Sarah a child in their old age (Gen. 15:1-6; 18:1-8; 21:1-4).
- (4) The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord made Abraham's reputation great in the world (see Genesis 12:2) through Abraham's miraculous victory over the four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings recorded in Genesis 14, which delivered the Dead Sea kings and Lot.
- (5) The Lord blessed Abraham in the sense that the Lord multiplied Abraham's possessions and livestock and prospered him financially (see Genesis 12:16; 13; 20).

In the Bible, five is the number of grace and grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ's finished work on the Cross and our union with Him.

The perfect tense of the verb *barakh* is significant in that it is a "constative" perfect indicating that the Lord blessed Abraham throughout or during the course of his entire lifetime.

The "piel" stem of the verb *barakh* is "real factitive," which means that Abraham experienced these blessings, which were a fulfillment of the Lord's promises to him.

Genesis 24:2-4, "Abraham said to his servant, the oldest of his household, who had charge of all that he owned, 'Please place your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I live, but you will go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.'"

In the Biblical world, parents usually arranged marriages. Abraham sets an example for his descendants to secure wives from the Semites who were blessed by God and not the Canaanites who are cursed by God according to Noah's prophecy recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 (see Genesis 15:16; 18:18-19; Deut. 7:1-4).

Abraham is too old to make the trip back to Mesopotamia since it was over five hundred miles. Also, it was customary, especially among wealthy families to make marriage arrangements through an intermediary, and which capacity, Abraham's servant served.

Furthermore, Abraham by then had learned that being the recipient of God's promises demanded that he stay in the Promised Land, which is Canaan. Therefore, Abraham sends his servant who is unnamed since the servant is going in the name of Isaac rather than for himself.

The unnamed servant is "Eliezer of Damascus" who is mentioned in Genesis 15 as being the heir of Abraham's household. The fact that Abraham had planned on Eliezer being his heir until God

promised him a child from his own body indicates that Abraham trusted Eliezer.

The responsibility for securing a bride for Isaac demanded a loyal servant who knew Abraham and the Lord. Genesis 24:2 records that this unnamed servant is Abraham's "**oldest**" servant in his household, which Eliezer would have been at this point in the narrative. This unnamed servant had "**charge of all**" that Abraham owned further indicating that this was Eliezer since Abraham had planned on Eliezer as being his heir until the Lord intervene.

Abraham's command to his servant to "**place your hand under my thigh**" is a euphemism for genitalia (Compare Genesis 46:26; Exodus 1:5; Judges 8:30). By putting his hands under Abraham's thigh and touching his genitals, the servant was giving an oath that was special and solemn.

Abraham had been circumcised as the "sign" of God's covenant with him, thus by the servant touching Abraham's genitals called to mind God's covenant promises of posterity. An oath by seat of procreation is appropriate in this instance where Abraham seeks to secure a bride for Isaac to fulfill the divine promises.

The placing of the servant's hands upon Abraham's genitals was therefore symbolic for success of the mission, which would make possible propagation of posterity and fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Swearing by the Lord as the God of heaven and earth acknowledged the Lord as the one true God, the omnipotent and sovereign Creator and covenant keeping God.

The reason why Abraham makes his servant swear "**by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of earth**" is to guarantee that the servant does not take a bride for Isaac from among the "godless" and "cursed" Canaanites but rather from Abraham's own relatives.

The bride selected for Isaac had to be chosen with particular care since she would be the mother of the multitude of nations, which God promised would come through Abraham's seed, through which the promised Savior would come and in

which all the nations of the earth would be blessed.

“**My country**” does “not” refer to Ur of the Chaldeans, which was located on the Euphrates River in southern Iraq but rather it refers to the city of Nahor, which was near Haran in northern Mesopotamia.

“**My relatives**” refers to Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife Milcah and their eight sons and their daughter Rebekah as well as Nahor’s four sons by his concubine Reumah as recorded in Genesis 22:20-24.

Genesis 24:5, “The servant said to him, ‘Suppose the woman is not willing to follow me to this land; should I take your son back to the land from where you came?’”

Abraham’s servant was not at all sure that he could accomplish even Abraham’s minimum requirement. So the servant raises the obvious problem: what if the girl refuses to leave her family?

Genesis 24:6, “Then Abraham said to him, ‘Beware that you do not take my son back there!’”

Abraham is adamant in insisting that Isaac not go to Mesopotamia because the heir of God’s promises must stay in the Promised Land, which is Canaan. In fact, Isaac never left the land of Canaan (see Genesis 26:2-3).

Also, Abraham knew that if Isaac had gone to Mesopotamia in search of a bride for himself, there would have been Satanic attacks in the form of temptations to stay among his relatives rather than return to Canaan.

The fact that Abraham stipulated to his servant to bring the bride to Isaac rather than Isaac to the bride echoes the first marriage where the Woman was brought to Adam and not vice versa.

Genesis 2:21, 22

“Then, the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, thus he slept and He surgically removed a portion of his side and then He closed up the place with flesh.”

“Then, the Lord God built this portion of his side, which He had surgically removed from

the man up into a woman. Then, He brought her to the man.”

The fact that Abraham stipulated to his servant to bring the bride to Isaac rather than Isaac to the bride typified or prefigures the bride of Christ being brought to Him at the rapture or resurrection of the church (cf. John 14:1-3; Acts 15:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).

Genesis 24:7, “The LORD, the God of heaven, who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land,’ He will send His angel before you, and you will take a wife for my son from there.”

The promise “**the Lord, the God heaven...will send His angel before you**” would reassure Abraham’s servant that he would have divine and angelic aid in accomplishing the task of finding a wife for Isaac. Abraham is in other words, telling his servant that the pressure is not on him to provide Isaac a woman but rather the responsibility lies with the Lord alone!

Abraham’s promise “**the Lord, the God heaven...will send His angel before you**” instructs the servant that the Lord will “providentially” work out the circumstances to bring him success in securing a bride for Isaac. The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory.

The doctrine of providence expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God Who reveals the purpose of providence through the work of Christ on the Cross.

Providence is extended to God’s forethought, omniscience, and the functional care over His creatures, both good and evil, but especially those creatures who have exercised positive volition toward His Word and have believed in Christ.

Abraham’s description of God, “who took me from my father’s house and from the land of my birth, and who spoke to me and who swore to me, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give this land’” recalls Abraham’s own experience with

God and expresses his confidence that God would meet Isaac's need as He did his.

The Lord's promise to Abraham, "**to your descendants I will give this land**" expresses Abraham's faithfulness to God's call to leave his homeland and settle in the land of Canaan. This promise of land by God to Abraham is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3, 13:14-17 and 15:1-7 and is called by theologians, the "Palestinian Covenant," which is an extension of the "Abrahamic" covenant.

Genesis 24:8, "But if the woman is not willing to follow you, then you will be free from this my oath; only do not take my son back there."

Abraham informs his servant that he would be absolved from responsibility bringing back a wife for Isaac if the chosen girl refuses to go. Abraham knows he can count on God but not on people. Therefore, he recognizes that the woman whom Isaac is to marry must make the choice to marry Isaac rather than against her will.

It would take faith on the part of the woman who marries Isaac since she would have to leave her homeland, family and friends as Abraham did.

Bruce K. Waltke, "While Abraham acts on the basis of God's promises, he does not presume upon them, freeing the servant of his oath if the Lord does not prosper his mission" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 327, Zondervan).

Genesis 24:2-8 records the last words of Abraham and fittingly the promises of God are his last recorded words.

Genesis 24:9, "So the servant placed his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter."

The servant agrees to the oath once he has understood his mission and finds assurance that he would not be held responsible if the woman choose not to return with him.

Genesis 24:10-14 presents Abraham's servant providentially meeting Rebekah at a well in Nahor in Aram Naharaim.

Genesis 24:10, "Then the servant took ten camels from the camels of his master, and set out with a variety of good things of his master's

in his hand; and he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor."

Abraham's servant made this trip in faith meaning that he trusted in the Lord for His guidance, asked for that guidance in prayer and then listened to God in prayer tell him where to go and identified for him the bride for Isaac.

Camels were prime measure of wealth back in the days of Abraham since camels were rare back then. Therefore, for Abraham's servant to take "ten" camels with him was an evidence of Abraham's great wealth and designed to impress the relatives of the bride and the bride herself.

The ten camels would have a practical purpose of providing the means of transportation back to Canaan for the bride and her entourage. They would also be used to test the character of the woman since Abraham's servant is going to ask the woman to water his camels and a camel can drink twenty-five gallons of water!

Betrothal was marked by presenting large gifts to the bride's family and so Abraham's servant goes prepared as evidenced that he took with "**a variety of good things of his master's.**"

"**Mesopotamia**" is composed of the pronoun noun *Aram* (sr* a&), "Aram" and the plural form of the noun *nahar* (rh*n*), "two rivers."

These two rivers were in the western part of Mesopotamia and the two rivers were the Balikh and the Khabur, tributaries of the Euphrates River. The city of Haran was on the Balikh River about a seven hundred mile journey north-northeast of Beersheba and nearby was the city of Nahor.

"**Nahor**" was Abraham's brother and he founded a city, which bears his name and is known in cuneiform sources as "Nakhur."

Genesis 24:11, "He made the camels kneel down outside the city by the well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw water."

The seven hundred mile journey has come to an end and is not even described even though undoubtedly they encountered interesting people and things, and dangers and difficulties. Nevertheless, God has given success to Abraham's servant on this trip.

Abraham's servant went directly to the place that Abraham's brother Nahor resided, whom Abraham received information about according to Genesis 22:20-24. It was not unusual for a newly arrived stranger to go directly to the public wells where he could replenish his water supplies.

Also, at the wells, he could gain valuable information about the town and make contacts since the well served as a meeting place for the townspeople and shepherds. In the days of Abraham, the custom was for the women, particularly unmarried girls to be responsible for drawing water and herding the flocks (cf. Gen. 29:10; Ex. 2:16; 1 Sam. 9:11), but not unusual for a man to do so as in the case of Jacob and Moses. It was also the custom in Abraham's day for the women to wait until the heat of the day was over to come out and draw water from a well. Of course Abraham's servant was aware of this and made it a point to be at the well of water by evening time.

Genesis 24:12, "He said, 'O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success today, and show lovingkindness to my master Abraham.'"

This is the first recorded instance of prayer for specific guidance in Scripture. In fact, the entire meeting with Rebekah is encircled by prayer (see Genesis 24:26-27).

The servant's prayer is essential for the fulfillment of his mission and demonstrates his humility and dependence upon God to meet his need and Isaac's as well as his awareness that God is sovereign over the circumstances and that an angel of God is present though invisible to facilitate this encounter between himself and Rebekah.

Proverbs 3:5-6, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Abraham's servant's prayer demonstrates his unselfishness in that he looks out for the interests of his master rather than his own well-being.

Philippians 2:3, 4

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves."

"do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Abraham and Isaac and would provide a wife for Isaac to fulfill His covenant promises.

The fact that Abraham's servant addresses God with the covenant name of God, *Yahweh* indicates that he is a believer.

"**God**" is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God has sovereignly determined to intervene in the life of this servant so that he meets Rebekah.

The fact that Abraham's servant uses the term *Elohim*, "**God**" demonstrates his awareness that God is sovereign over his circumstances and therefore expresses his confidence that God would provide a wife for Isaac.

The fact that Abraham's servant addresses God in prayer, "**O Lord, the God of my master Abraham**" indicates that he recognized the Lord as the God of Abraham because Abraham introduced him to the Lord.

He was circumcised as everyone in Abraham's household was and was told why by Abraham, thus he became a believer through Abraham's witness. Also, his prayer demonstrates he not only recognizes God as Abraham's God but also his since he turns to God to solve this impossible task, which demonstrates knowledge of God's character and nature.

Furthermore, God would not answer the prayer of an unbeliever unless it is of course the prayer to accept Christ as Savior.

The servant's request "**please grant me success today**" demonstrates his awareness of God's providence and sovereign control over circumstances.

"**Lovingkindness**" is the noun *chesedh* (ds#j#) (kheh-sed), which means, "loyal for faithful love" to Abraham and Isaac and which loyal or faithful love God expresses in faithfulness to His covenant promises to Abraham and Isaac and their descendants.

Therefore, we see that Abraham's servant has an awareness and knowledge of God's character and the covenants He has established with Abraham and Isaac.

This word *chesedh* involves the inferior partner depending on the kindness of the superior to meet a desperate need. Therefore, we see that Abraham's servant is depending on God who is superior to meet the desperate need of Isaac to have a wife.

Genesis 24:13, "Behold, I am standing by the spring, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water."

Genesis 24:14, "now may it be that the girl to whom I say, 'Please let down your jar so that I may drink,' and who answers, 'Drink, and I will water your camels also' -- may she be the one whom You have appointed for Your servant Isaac; and by this I will know that You have shown lovingkindness to my master."

Notice that Abraham's servant does "not" attempt to advertise in the city that he is looking for a wife for his rich master but rather, he prays to God instead demonstrating his wisdom.

Now, that Abraham's servant is in perfect location to observe the unmarried women of the city of Nahor, but now he is faced with an almost impossible problem to resolve. Namely, how does he go about determining the spiritual character of the woman, which would identify her as the woman that God wants Isaac to marry? Therefore, we see the servant turning to prayer to resolve this problem.

The plan that the servant proposes to God in prayer to determine the identity of the woman that God wants Isaac to marry appears on the surface to be "putting out the fleece" and testing God as Gideon did in Judges 6:36-40 but rather, the servant's proposal to God in prayer would test the woman rather than God.

So the servant asks God to confirm His choice for Isaac by a test. The fact that the servant's proposal to God in prayer was to test the woman expresses his care and concern for Isaac and his high opinion of Isaac as well as his father Abraham. He does not want Isaac to marry a woman with poor character.

Proverbs 12:4, "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones."

So according to the servant's plan, the woman must volunteer to draw water for ten thirsty camels. As we noted, camels can drink twenty-five gallons of water! The servant knew the kind of hospitality that characterized Abraham, so the test would also demonstrate that she was the kind of woman who would fit into Abraham's family.

Camels are known to be very thirsty creatures, especially after a long trip in the desert. To give the servant a drink was one thing but to give a drink to the men and then to satisfy the thirst of the camels was an entirely different matter. The servant did not plan to ask the woman for water for his camels, only for himself. She could thus meet his request quite easily, while sensing no obligation to meet the total needs of the caravan. Any woman who was willing to "go the extra mile" in this matter was one of unusual character. Therefore, we see that the "character" of the woman Isaac was to marry was essential to God and not her beauty or virginity.

Proverbs 31:10, "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."

It was a wonderful plan, and the servant committed it to God in prayer. This unusual request reflected deep insight into human nature as well as dependence upon divine guidance.

Bruce K. Waltke, "Hospitality is the determinant, over and above beauty and virginity (24:16). Since each camel could drink twenty-five gallons, the servant's sign is sagacious; it is a test of the woman's kindness, hospitality, industry and willingness to help a stranger. Sternberg calls it 'a shrewd character test.' He states, 'What touchstone could be more appropriate than the reception of a wayfarer to determine a woman's fitness to marry into the family of the paragon of hospitality? And it is a stiff test, too, since it would require far more than common civility to volunteer to water 'ten' thirsty camels'" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 328, Zondervan).

Genesis 24:15-20 records Rebekah appearing to Abraham's servant and identifying herself as Isaac's bride by her actions.

Genesis 24:15, "Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder."

What appears to take place by chance from the human perspective is from the divine perspective a part of an orchestrated plan by God from eternity past. This answer to the servant's prayer is the outworking of the divine decree.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable will regarding the bride of Isaac. This outworking of the divine decree is called the "providence of God."

God's sovereignty is expressed in the comprehensive plan or decree for world history. The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works. This encounter between Rebekah and Abraham's servant was part of God's chosen and adopted plan for man's salvation, Isaac and Rebekah.

The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. This encounter between Abraham's servant and Rebekah was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory, which He foreordained to come to pass.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His attribute of sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification (Isa. 46:10; Eph. 1:9). This encounter between Abraham's servant and Rebekah was the result of God's sovereign will and omniscience by which this encounter was brought into being and was controlled and made subject to His pleasure and glorified Him.

The "decree of God" is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes,

courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity (i.e., that they will certainly take place).

When I say "comprehending" I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by "determining" I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events.

The omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past this encounter between Abraham's servant and Rebekah and the course it would take and its conditions and relations and determined that this encounter with Rebekah would take place.

All history was yet future at the time of the decrees. Therefore, this encounter between Rebekah and Abraham's servant was known by God in eternity past before anything was created and was sovereignly determined by God to take place at the time it did.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. It was God's eternal and immutable will that this encounter between Abraham's servant and Rebekah would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to it and the manner in which the events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. The will of God in relation to the divine decrees refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time. God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that this encounter with Rebekah and Abraham's servant would take place in the exact time that it did.

Human beings and angels have a volition that is truly free. Many things occur as a result of angelic and human free will acting contrary to God's desires. God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to the

sovereign will of God and without compromising the justice of God.

The divine decrees are the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future. God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur; He decided that they would exist. In doing so, He did not interfere with angelic or human freedom of choice. In fact, He decreed that we would have freedom of choice.

In giving us volition, He also decreed that our decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place-even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the decisions of Abraham, his servant, Rebekah and her family would all take place in time and even those by Rebekah's family, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what we would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle our decisions. Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time Abraham's decisions, his servant's, Rebekah's and those her family would make and decreed that those decisions would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle their decisions.

This answered prayer is simply a manifestation of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future. The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed for this encounter between Abraham's servant and Rebekah.

Genesis 24:15, "Before he had finished speaking, behold, Rebekah who was born to Bethuel the son of Milcah, the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor, came out with her jar on her shoulder."

The answer to the servant's prayer was already on the way with the angel preparing the situation.

Isaiah 65:24, "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."

The name "**Rebekah**" (h^q*b+r!) (Hebrew: *rivqah* pronounced: riv-kaw) whose name is related to the Akkadian *rabaku*, "to be soft or springy," thus her name means, "soft, supple."

"**Rebekah**" was a sister to Laban and a second cousin to Isaac whose father of course is Abraham.

"**Bethuel**" (la@WjB+) (Hebrew: *b^ethu'el* pronounced: beth-oo-ale) whose name means, "dweller in God" was the eighth and final son of Nahor and Milcah according to Genesis 22:20-24 and was the father of Rebekah.

The name of Nahor's wife is "**Milcah**" (hK*I=m!) (Hebrew: *milcah* pronounced mil-kaw), which means, "queen" and she was Lot's sister according to Genesis 11:27-29 and therefore, we see that "**Milcah**" was both wife and niece to "**Nahor**."

"**Nahor**" was named after his grandfather (see Genesis 11:25) and this is the only instance in all the genealogies of Genesis 5, 10 and 11 that we see someone being named after an ancestor indicating that Abraham and Nahor's family were a close knit one.

Genesis 11:31-32 records that Terah left Ur of the Chaldeans with Abraham and did not take Nahor indicating that they remained in Ur of the Chaldeans but later it appears that Nahor came to the region of Haran as indicated by Genesis 22:20-24 and 24.

Haran died at a young age in Ur of the Chaldeans in the presence of his father Terah according to Genesis 11:28.

Nahor founded a city, which is mentioned in Genesis 24:10 and is known in cuneiform sources as "Nakhur" and this city was situated in the upper Euphrates region in the Balikh Valley, near the city of Haran.

Genesis 24:16, "The girl was very beautiful, a virgin, and no man had had relations with her; and she went down to the spring and filled her jar and came up."

“**Girl**” is the noun *na`arah* (נַרְאָה) (nah-ar-aw), which refers to a “young girl of marriageable age.”

Genesis 24:17, “Then the servant ran to meet her, and said, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your jar.’”

The servant does not walk to meet Rebekah but rather runs to meet her expressing his eager anticipation to the answer of his prayer and faith that the prayer would answered.

Genesis 24:18, “She said, ‘Drink, my lord’; and she quickly lowered her jar to her hand, and gave him a drink.”

The servant deliberately refrains from asking Rebekah to water his camels in order to test her.

Genesis 24:19, “Now when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, ‘I will draw also for your camels until they have finished drinking.’”

In Genesis 24:14, Abraham’s servant prayed that the woman would not only give him a drink but also draw water for his camels but we see that she does more than what the servant prayed for in that she offers to give the camels water to drink “**until they have finished drinking.**”

Now, remember a camel can drink twenty-five gallons of water and so she would be there a while and would take up a lot of her time and would be a sacrifice for her. Rebekah demonstrates her spiritual character in that she goes the extra mile for Abraham’s servant, which was taught by our Lord to His disciples.

Matthew 5:41, “Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.”

Genesis 24:20, “So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, and ran back to the well to draw, and she drew for all his camels.”

Notice that Rebekah does not walk but she runs back to the well to draw water for the camels demonstrating that her hospitality is enthusiastic. Rebekah has exceeded the servant’s expectations in that she does more than he asked God for her to do. She has demonstrated nobility of character and that she is an ideal wife.

Notice that she is hospitable to strangers, kind to animals, generous with her time, considerate of others and willing to give of herself to others.

Genesis 24:21-25 records Rebekah identifying herself through her words and actions.

Genesis 24:21, “Meanwhile, the man was gazing at her in silence, to know whether the LORD had made his journey successful or not.”

Abraham’s servant Eliezer is wise in that he waits to see if the young woman would finish the difficult and arduous task of watering his ten camels before he decides that she is the wife that God has provided Isaac.

Genesis 24:22 records that she did finish the task and therefore we see Eliezer showering her with gifts because God has not only answered his prayer but did much more than he asked for in his prayer.

Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Genesis 24:22, “When the camels had finished drinking, the man took a gold ring weighing a half-shekel and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold.”

When Rebekah had finished watering the servant’s camels and thus exceeded that which the servant had asked God for concerning her, he knew that this was the woman God had given Isaac. The servant’s next act was to offer Rebekah gold as a reward for the difficult task for watering ten camels, which she freely undertook. He gives her a gold nose ring and two gold bracelets for her wrists.

These gifts were designed to win her goodwill and impress her family and confirm that the servant has a wealthy and generous master, which turns out to be an important consideration in the subsequent negotiations with Rebekah’s family.

He gave Rebekah “**a gold ring weighing a half-shekel,**” which would be equivalent to one-fifth of an ounce or 5.5 grams.

Eliezer also gave her **“two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels in gold,”** which would be equivalent to four ounces or 110 grams and would be a very handsome sum.

Genesis 24:23, “and said, ‘Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room for us to lodge in your father's house?’”

This question **“whose daughter are you?”** is absolutely essential since the answer will determine if she is indeed the bride for Isaac. The answer to the question is critical since Abraham stipulated to the servant that the woman that Isaac was to marry must be a relative of his as recorded in Genesis 24:4, **“go to my country and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son Isaac.”**

She has passed the character test with flying colors and comes from Abraham's country but will she be a relative of his as he stipulated and which God required since Isaac's wife must be a Shemite as Abraham and Isaac were and not a Canaanite.

“Please tell me” indicates the urgency of the servant's request.

Genesis 24:24, “She said to him, ‘I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, whom she bore to Nahor.’”

Rebekah does not give her name to the servant because the servant didn't ask her for her name but rather **“whose daughter”** she was. The servant does not ask for her name but rather her father's because Abraham stipulated that the woman Isaac was to marry must be from his relatives as recorded in Genesis 24:4.

Rebekah identifies her father as **“Bethuel”** (la@WjB+) (Hebrew: *b^ethu'el* pronounced: beth-oo-ale) whose name means, “dweller in God” and was the eighth and final son of Nahor and Milcah according to Genesis 22:20-24.

Rebekah's father Bethuel is Isaac's cousin, thus God's providence has exceeded Abraham's request for a relative to be Isaac's wife.

The name of Nahor's wife is **“Milcah”** (hK*I=m!) (Hebrew: *milka* pronounced mil-kaw), which means, “queen” and she was Lot's sister according to Genesis 11:27-29 and therefore, we see that **“Milcah”** was both wife and niece to **“Nahor.”**

“Nahor” was the brother of Abraham and was named after his grandfather (see Genesis 11:25).

So we see that Rebekah mentions her father (Bethuel), her father's mother (Milcah) and her grandfather (Nahor). The identification of these individuals was exactly the information that he was looking for from the girl since it answered perfectly to the qualifications that Abraham specified for the woman to be Isaac's wife.

Genesis 24:25, “Again she said to him, ‘We have plenty of both straw and feed, and room to lodge in.’”

As a final demonstration that this beautiful young woman is the one that God wants Isaac to marry, she demonstrates her hospitality, which characterized Abraham's family.

Genesis 24:26-27 gives us the record of Abraham's servant Eliezer worshipping the Lord in prayer as a result of the Lord's directing him in finding Rebekah.

Genesis 24:26, “Then the man bowed low and worshiped the LORD.”

This beautiful young woman who watered the servant's ten camels and informed the servant that her family was related to Abraham and her hospitality exceeded everything that the servant asked God for in prayer. The young woman's actions, background and character demonstrated to Abraham's servant that she was indeed the woman that God wanted Isaac to marry.

The servant recognized the providence of God in all these circumstances and bowed to the ground and worshipped the Lord with thanksgiving and praise and in awe of His guidance and direction. Abraham's servant responded to God's providential care in directing him to Rebekah and identifying her to him by worshipping the Lord in prayer.

There are five essential elements to prayer: (1) Confession (2) Thanksgiving (3) Worship (4) Intercession (5) Petition.

Here we see Abraham's servant manifesting in his prayer two of these elements, namely, thanksgiving and worship of God.

Thanksgiving

Colossians 4:2, “Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”

Worship

Psalm 18:3, “I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures. It is the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship, “Worship is the believer’s response of all that they are –mind, emotions, will and body–to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience and its practical side in objective obedience to God’s revealed will. Worship is a loving response that’s balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better” (Real Worship, 26).

If we paraphrase Wiersbe’s definition, we could say the following: Abraham’s servant Eliezer is worshipping the Lord in that he is responding in his mind (his thoughts), emotions (joy), and body (falling on his face) to what God is (omnipotent and sovereign and faithful) and did in leading him to Rebekah and identifying her for him and he is responding to God’s providence.

Psalm 95:6, 7, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the “immanency” of God meaning that the Lord had involved Himself in and concerned Himself with and intervened in the life of Abraham’s servant so as to direct him to Rebekah and identify her as Isaac’s wife.

Genesis 24:27, “He said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His lovingkindness and His truth

toward my master; as for me, the LORD has guided me in the way to the house of my master’s brothers.’”

Genesis 24:27 presents the servant’s prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God for guiding and directing him to Rebekah and identifying her as the woman that God wanted Isaac to marry.

“**Blessed**” is the passive voice of the verb *barakh* (lr^B*) (bah-rach), which means, “to bless” in the sense of “praising” the Lord for His providence and sovereignty over circumstances and denotes the covenant relationship between Abraham and the Lord.

Psalm 72:18, “Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvelous deeds.”

“**God**” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes that God has sovereignly intervened in the life of Abraham’s servant and directed him to Rebekah and identified her as being the woman that God wanted Isaac to marry.

The fact that Abraham’s servant uses the term *Elohim*, “**God**” demonstrates his awareness that God is sovereign over his circumstances.

“**Lovingkindness**” is the noun *chesedh* (ds#j#) (kheh-sed), which means, “loyal or faithful love” to Abraham and Isaac and which loyal or faithful love God expressed in faithfulness to His covenant promises to Abraham in providing a wife for his son Isaac.

Micah 7:20, “You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.”

Therefore, we see that Abraham’s servant has an awareness and knowledge of God’s character and the covenants He has established with Abraham and Isaac.

This word *chesedh* involves the inferior partner depending on the kindness of the superior to meet a desperate need. Therefore, we see that Abraham’s servant acknowledged that God met the desperate need of Isaac to have a wife.

“**Truth**” is the noun *emeth* (tm#a\$) (eh-meth), which is used by Abraham’s servant to praise the Lord’s faithfulness, and reliability and

trustworthiness in guiding him directly to Rebekah.

Psalm 100:5, “For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.”

Psalm 33:4, “For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”

When taken together, these two noun *chesedh*, “**lovingkindness**” and *emeth*, “**truth**” express the continued stability and reliability of God’s unconditional love towards Abraham and Isaac.

Psalm 25:10, “All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.”

Abraham’s servant also acknowledges the providential care of the Lord who had guided and directed him to Rebekah.

Proverbs 3:6, “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Proverbs 4:11, “I guide you in the way of wisdom and lead you along straight paths.”

This encounter between Abraham’s servant and Rebekah was the result of God’s sovereign will and omniscience by which this encounter was brought into being and glorified Him. The omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past this encounter between Abraham’s servant and Rebekah and the course it would take and its conditions and relations and determined that this encounter with Rebekah would take place.

This encounter between Rebekah and Abraham’s servant was known by God in eternity past before anything was created and was sovereignly determined by God to take place at the time it did. It was God’s eternal and immutable will that this encounter between Abraham’s servant and Rebekah would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to it and the manner in which the events would transpire. God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that this encounter with Rebekah and Abraham’s servant would take place in the exact time that it did.

All of this, Abraham’s servant Eliezer recognized and acknowledged. He saw with the eye of faith God’s providence in leading and guiding and directing him to Rebekah.

Genesis 24:28-49 presents Abraham’s servant Eliezer recounting for Rebekah and her family his mission and God’s providence in directing him to Rebekah and it also records him proposing marriage.

Genesis 24:28, “**Then the girl ran and told her mother's household about these things.**”

The fact that Rebekah “**ran**” indicates her excitement over her encounter with Abraham’s servant and the gifts that he gave her, which indicated to her that he was seeking a wife for Abraham’s son, Isaac.

Of course, Rebekah had to ask her father Bethuel and her brother Laban if it would be alright for Abraham’s servant to stay the night with them.

Now, Rebekah heard the servant mention Abraham’s name in his prayer of thanksgiving and praise to God for providentially leading him to the one God had ordained to marry Isaac. Remember, Abraham is a legend in the Middle East and she would have heard about him. Therefore, the fact that she runs indicates that she sensed the importance of this visit from Abraham’s servant and was eagerly anticipating what the servant would say to her father and brother.

Rebekah informs her mother’s household of her encounter with Abraham’s servant since “In that culture, a girl’s primary familial relation is with the mother (Ruth 1:8; Song 3:4; 8:2)” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 330, Zondervan).

Genesis 24:29, “**Now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban; and Laban ran outside to the man at the spring.**”

Rebekah’s brother Laban took responsibility for the family not because Bethuel, Rebekah’s father was incapacitated. But rather, Laban took responsibility because in the culture of that day, the family government was not patriarchal but “fratriachal.”

The name “**Laban**” (/b*l*) (Hebrew: *lavan*) means, “white” and is used elsewhere in the Bible (Isa. 24:23; 30:26; cf. Song. 6:10) as a poetic metonym for the moon.

The accounts of Laban are found in Genesis 24 and 29-31 and whose grandfather was Nahor, Abraham’s brother, and of course his sister was

Rebekah. Laban lived in the city of Nahor near Haran along one of the tributaries of the Euphrates River in what is now modern Syria and his occupation was a sheep and goat herder.

Genesis 24:30, “When he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s wrists, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, ‘This is what the man said to me,’ he went to the man; and behold, he was standing by the camels at the spring.”

Genesis 24:29-30 gives us insight into Laban’s character in that he did “not” run to see Abraham’s servant to show hospitality to him as Rebekah did but rather out of greed “**when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s wrists.**”

The statement “**when he saw the ring and the bracelets on his sister’s wrists**” implies that Laban’s warm welcome for Abraham’s servant is prompted by the prospect of gaining material wealth from this yet unidentified stranger.

Further indicating that Laban is motivated by greed is that the first thing he noticed about Abraham’s servant was that “**he was standing by the camels at the spring**” and camels were in Abraham’s day rare and luxurious type of transportation.

Camels were prime measure of wealth back in the days of Abraham since camels were rare back then. Therefore, the Scripture implies that Laban runs out to meet Abraham’s servant because of the gold his sister had on and not because he was a hospitable individual like his sister. This anticipates the character of Laban that was demonstrated later in his dealings with Jacob who was the son of Rebekah and Isaac.

Genesis 24:31, “And he said, ‘Come in, blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside since I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels?’”

Laban’s invitation “**Come in, blessed of the Lord**” is true of Abraham whom the servant represents as the Lord had blessed Abraham with great wealth but the invitation lacks sincerity since Laban is more concerned about wealth and material blessing that he can extract from Abraham’s servant.

Genesis 24:32, “So the man entered the house. Then Laban unloaded the camels, and he gave straw and feed to the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.”

The camels were taken care of first and the provision for them was generous and the provision of water to wash one’s feet was common hospitality (see Genesis 18:1-8).

Genesis 24:32 tells us for the first time that Abraham’s servant did not take this journey alone for it reveals that there were men that accompanied him.

Genesis 24:33, “But when food was set before him to eat, he said, ‘I will not eat until I have told my business.’ And he said, ‘Speak on.’”

The custom of the day was for the guests to be served a meal and then embark upon a discussion of business but Eliezer forgoes the food in order to first explain the purpose of his trip to the city of Nahor. The urgency of the business at hand has Eliezer refusing the food set before him so that he might explain the purpose of his trip. Therefore, we see that Eliezer puts his mission and responsibility before his need and comfort.

His refusal to eat the food first before explaining his business allows him to control the situation and conversation and to avoid any sense of obligation to Laban and Bethuel.

In Genesis 24:34-48, Abraham’s servant Eliezer gives a long and detailed report to Laban and Bethuel where he recounts his entire experience that is recorded in Genesis 24:1-27. This type of repetition is characteristic of ancient Near Eastern epic literature and is carried over into various kinds of Biblical prose narrative. Eliezer will vary the account to meet the exigencies of this situation.

His account gives prominence to Abraham’s wealth, which is made obvious by the size of the retinue and the gifts he has brought with him. The account of Abraham’s servant is also designed to persuade Rebekah’s family that God providentially has led him to them and that it is God’s will for Rebekah to leave her family and marry Isaac.

Having found the woman who should be Isaac's wife, the servant now had to convince the family that Abraham's son Isaac was the right man for Rebekah. The fact that Rebekah would need to move far away was an obstacle which must be overcome by strong argumentation. This delicate task was skillfully handled by the servant. The urgency of his mission was indicated by his refusal to eat until the purpose of his journey was explained.

Genesis 24:34, "So he said, 'I am Abraham's servant.'"

First, Eliezer identified himself as a representative of Abraham, Bethuel's uncle, which would have set aside many objections of these relatives, who were concerned to protect the purity of Rebekah's descendants. He identifies himself as "Abraham's servant" since Rebekah's family did not know who he was. He does not give his own name indicating that the gifts he gave to Rebekah and the wealth he is carrying with him on this trip are not his own but Abraham's.

Genesis 24:35, "The LORD has greatly blessed my master, so that he has become rich; and He has given him flocks and herds, and silver and gold, and servants and maids, and camels and donkeys."

Then the success of Abraham was reported revealing that Abraham had not been foolish to leave Haran after all since God had prospered him greatly. By inference, this testified to Isaac's ability to provide abundantly for the needs of Rebekah, who was not living on a poverty level herself (cf. verses 59, 61).

Genesis 24:36, "Now Sarah my master's wife bore a son to my master in her old age, and he has given him all that he has."

The fact that Sarah and Abraham produced a child in their advanced age was again evidence of God's blessing upon their lives. Isaac was said to be the sole heir of Abraham's wealth (verse 36) and so if Rebekah marries Isaac she will inherit Abraham's fortune, which would interest greedy Laban.

Eliezer is a skilled spokesperson for Abraham in that he carefully selects the details that will motivate and encourage the family to let Rebekah marry Isaac. The mention of Sarah bearing a child

in her old age assures Rebekah's family that Isaac is not too old.

Genesis 24:37-38 recounts Abraham's instructions to his servant Eliezer regarding securing a bride for Isaac, and which instructions are recorded in Genesis 24:3-4.

Genesis 24:37, "My master made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live.'"

The mention of the oath demonstrates to Rebekah's family the great seriousness of the matter at hand, which is also a delicate form of flattery to the bride and her family, complimenting them that Abraham was so seriously committed to arranging his son's marriage among his relatives.

Also, the servant demonstrates tactfulness in that he does not mention Abraham's departure from his family in Haran. The mention of the Canaanites explains why Isaac is still not married.

Genesis 24:38, "but you shall go to my father's house and to my relatives, and take a wife for my son."

By mentioning Abraham's request that Isaac marry within his own family and his refusal to allow marriage with the Canaanites assures Rebekah's family that her children will be the sole heirs.

Genesis 24:39 recounts Eliezer's concerns to Abraham if the woman will not return with him, which is recorded in Genesis 24:5.

Genesis 24:39, "I said to my master, 'Suppose the woman does not follow me.'"

Genesis 24:40 recounts Abraham giving assurance to Eliezer that God will providentially direct him in finding and securing a bride for Isaac, and which assurance is recorded in Genesis 24:7. The servant tactfully omits Abraham's insistence that Isaac must not be allowed to return to Haran, which is recorded in Genesis 24:6. The fact that Eliezer's trip was successful is evidenced that He was guided by the Lord and aided by His angel.

Genesis 24:40, "He said to me, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked, will send His angel with you to make your journey successful, and

you will take a wife for my son from my relatives and from my father's house.”

Genesis 24:41 recounts Abraham giving assurance to his servant that his servant would be free of any responsibility if the woman does not want to return with him, and which assurance is recorded in Genesis 24:8.

Genesis 24:41, “then you will be free from my oath, when you come to my relatives; and if they do not give her to you, you will be free from my oath.”

Genesis 24:42-44 recounts Eliezer's prayer to God for guidance and direction in finding and identifying Isaac's wife, and which prayer is recorded in Genesis 24:12-14.

Genesis 24:42, “So I came today to the spring, and said, ‘O LORD, the God of my master Abraham, if now You will make my journey on which I go successful.’”

Genesis 24:43, “behold, I am standing by the spring, and may it be that the maiden who comes out to draw, and to whom I say, ‘Please let me drink a little water from your jar.’”

Genesis 24:44, “and she will say to me, ‘You drink, and I will draw for your camels also; let her be the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.’”

Genesis 24:45-47 recounts the answer to Eliezer's prayer in which Rebekah through her actions demonstrates her character and that she is the one that the Lord has chosen to marry Isaac, and which actions of Rebekah are recorded in Genesis 24:15-25.

Genesis 24:45, “Before I had finished speaking in my heart, behold, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder, and went down to the spring and drew, and I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’”

The narrator does not inform the reader as to how Eliezer learned Rebekah's name since it is never recorded that he was informed by Rebekah. The mention of her name here by Eliezer implies that she either must have told him or he overheard it spoken by her family.

Either way, the narrator thought it unimportant for the reader. Instead, the Scripture does record Rebekah identifying her father, her father's mother and her grandfather since this is of the utmost importance because Abraham stipulated that Isaac's bride must be taken from among his relatives.

Genesis 24:46, “She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder, and said, ‘Drink, and I will water your camels also’; so I drank, and she watered the camels also.”

Genesis 24:47, “Then I asked her, and said, ‘Whose daughter are you?’ And she said, ‘The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him’; and I put the ring on her nose, and the bracelets on her wrists.”

Genesis 24:48 recounts Eliezer worshipping the Lord in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise for His providence in guiding him to Rebekah and helping him identify her as the one He has chosen Isaac to marry, and which prayer is recorded in Genesis 24:26-27.

Genesis 24:48, “And I bowed low and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to take the daughter of my master's kinsman for his son.”

Eliezer is brilliant by mentioning the second prayer at the well, he says: “I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had guided me in the right way to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son.”

Bruce K. Waltke, “The repetition of the story is necessary to persuade the family to acknowledge the hand of the Lord. His detailed recounting of Abraham's faith, of his own prayers, and of his providential meeting with Rebekah challenges the listeners to recognize God's approval of this marriage” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 331, Zondervan).

Eliezer puts Bethuel and Laban in a position where they can hardly refuse now and so if they would say “no” it would be a refusal of the hand of God.

Genesis 24:49, “So now if you are going to deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if

not, let me know, that I may turn to the right hand or the left.”

“**Kindly**” is the noun *chesedh* (ds#j#) (kheh-sed), which appeared in Genesis 24:27 to describe God’s “loyal or faithful love” to Abraham and Isaac but here it is used by Abraham’s servant requesting that Rebekah’s family respond to Abraham with the same loyal or faithful love that God demonstrated to Abraham.

“**Truly**” is the noun *emeth* (tm#a\$) (eh-meth), which also appeared in Genesis 24:27 to describe God’s faithfulness, and reliability and trustworthiness in guiding Abraham’s servant directly to Rebekah but here it is used by Abraham’s servant requesting that Rebekah’s family respond to Abraham with the same kind of kind faithfulness and trustworthiness that God demonstrated to Abraham.

When taken together, these two nouns *chesedh*, “**kindly**” and *emeth*, “**truly**” indicates that Abraham’s servant Eliezer is requesting that Rebekah’s family respond to God’s love and faithfulness to Abraham by demonstrating the same kind of love and faithfulness to Abraham.

Abraham’s servant recounting of God’s providence in directing him to Rebekah’s family coupled with his request to respond in the same love and faithfulness that God demonstrated to Abraham was a subtle and tactful way of saying, “will you go against God’s will or will you reject it because it is obvious that God’s hand is in this.”

Abraham’s servant’s recounting of his mission recorded in Genesis 24:37-49 is much more important to his purposes than Genesis 24:34-36. The most compelling argument he could possibly provide was evidence that it was the will of God for Rebekah to become the wife of Isaac.

In Genesis 24:50-61 we have the record of Rebekah and her family’s response to the marriage proposal presented to them by Abraham’s servant, Eliezer.

Genesis 24:50, “Then Laban and Bethuel replied, ‘The matter comes from the LORD; so we cannot speak to you bad or good.’”

Genesis 24:51, “Here is Rebekah before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master’s son, as the LORD has spoken.”

Rebekah’s family cannot reject the marriage proposal since Eliezer made it clear to them that it is the Lord’s will is that Rebekah marry Isaac.

Genesis 24:52, “When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the ground before the LORD.”

Eliezer responds to their acceptance of the marriage proposal by prostrating himself on the ground in a wordless prayer, which expresses his thanksgiving and appreciation to the Lord for making successful this trip to secure a bride for Isaac.

Genesis 24:53, “The servant brought out articles of silver and articles of gold, and garments, and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.”

Not only does Eliezer give gifts to Rebekah but also her family, which was the custom of the day.

“**Precious things**” is the noun *mighdanoth* (tw{nR*g+m!}) (mig-daw-naw), which refers to the “bride-price,” that was compensation for the loss of the bride’s presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to Rebekah’s family that she would be well cared for by Isaac.

Genesis 24:54, “Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night. When they arose in the morning, he said, ‘Send me away to my master.’”

Finally, after securing Rebekah for Isaac in negotiations with Rebekah’s brother Laban and father Bethuel, Eliezer relaxes and eats and drinks and spent the night in Rebekah’s home but the next morning Eliezer states his desire to leave immediately with Rebekah. He conducted himself as a charming and polite diplomat in the negotiations to secure Rebekah as Isaac’s bride but now he does not even say “please,” which from the perspective of Rebekah’s family, is insensitive and impolite.

It was customary during the days of the patriarchs for the bride of the family to have some time to

say their goodbyes to the bride and here Eliezer wants to forgo this.

From Eliezer's perspective, he believed that there should be no delay in leaving when it is clearly the Lord's will that Rebekah is to marry Isaac. The fact that Eliezer wanted to leave immediately with Rebekah and bring her back to Isaac teaches us that we are not to delay or procrastinate in doing God's will.

Eliezer made an oath with Abraham before God regarding securing a bride for Isaac among Abraham's relatives and he did not want to delay returning to Isaac with Rebekah and fulfilling the mission for which he was sent.

When the Lord called His disciples, they did not delay in following Him but rather left what they were doing immediately and followed Him.

Mark 1:16-18

"As He was going along by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen."

"And Jesus said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.'"

"Immediately they left their nets and followed Him."

Our Lord taught His disciples that to be a disciple of the Lord, we cannot procrastinate in following Him.

Luke 9:57-59

"As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, 'I will follow You wherever You go.'"

"And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'"

"And He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.'"

The statement "**Permit me first to go and bury my father**" is a colloquial saying in common use and really meant, "Let me attend to my family interests."

Luke 9:60, "But He said to him, 'Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.'"

The Lord's reply to this man was that God's interests come before family interests and this is what Eliezer is teaching Rebekah's family!

By delaying the departure, the old Adamic sin natures of Rebekah's family and in particular Laban would find reasons to rethink their decision and possibly change it, which Satan would want since Isaac and Rebekah would carry on the line of Christ.

Furthermore, Eliezer is being a good servant in that his first responsibility is not to Rebekah's family but to the Lord and his masters Abraham and Isaac who would be anxiously awaiting word and so he desires to get back home as soon as possible.

Genesis 24:55, "But her brother and her mother said, 'Let the girl stay with us a few days, say ten; afterward she may go.'"

Genesis 24:56, "He said to them, 'Do not delay me, since the LORD has prospered my way. Send me away that I may go to my master.'"

Eliezer declines their offer stating that the Lord has prospered his way, thus implying that by delaying they would be hindering the will of the Lord from being accomplished with Isaac and Rebekah. Therefore, Eliezer is giving an implicit warning to Rebekah's family that if they detain him they are acting against the will of the Lord. This does not appear to faze Laban and Rebekah's mother since they decide to settle the matter by asking Rebekah what her desire is.

Genesis 24:57, "And they said, 'We will call the girl and consult her wishes.'"

Genesis 24:58, "Then they called Rebekah and said to her, 'Will you go with this man?' And she said, 'I will go.'"

To question Rebekah was wrong since the family had already agreed to the marriage through their negotiations with Eliezer. These delaying tactics and unscrupulous behavior on the part of Laban and his family foreshadow the conduct and greed of Laban that will trouble Jacob who was the son of Rebekah and Isaac (see Genesis 29:23; 31:41).

Rebekah's reply demonstrates her obedience to the will of the Lord and it also demonstrates her faith in that she was trusting in the Lord to take care of her now that she was leaving her home with a stranger to go marry a stranger!

Rebekah has identified for herself that it is the will of God that she marry Isaac.

How to identify what is the will of God and what is not: (1) God will never tell us to get involved in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with the Word of God. (2) God will often ask us to do something, which conflicts with human wisdom. (3) God will never tell us to do anything that gratifies the old Adamic sin nature. (4) God will challenge our faith or trust in Him in order to build our relationship and intimacy with Him. (5) God will often call for us to be courageous.

Genesis 24:59, "Thus they sent away their sister Rebekah and her nurse with Abraham's servant and his men."

The Hebrew term translated "nurse" refers to a "wet nurse," who was an esteemed member of the family and after suckling the child, had the responsibility to rear the child and serve as guardian.

Genesis 24:60, "They blessed Rebekah and said to her, 'May you, our sister, Become thousands of ten thousands, and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them.'"

Rebekah's family blessing upon Rebekah echoes the Lord's promises to Abraham.

The statement by Rebekah's family "**may you, our sister become thousands of ten thousands and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them**" is a prophecy, which echoes the Lord's prophecy to Abraham after obeying the Lord's command to sacrifice Isaac in Genesis 22:17.

Genesis 22:17, "indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies."

In the ancient world, to "possess the gate" of one's enemies was to have access to a walled city and possessing control of the city.

In relation to the angelic conflict, the term "**enemies**" refers to Satan and the kingdom of darkness who at the present time temporarily rule this world (Eph. 2:1-3; 6:10-18; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 Jn. 5:19; Rev. 12:10). Therefore, the Lord's promise to Abraham that "**your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies**" is a prophecy that through Jesus Christ, Satan would be defeated, thus fulfilling the prophecy of Genesis 3:15 (see Colossians 2:15; Philippians 2:6-11; Ephesians 1:15-22).

Genesis 3:15, "And I will put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed (Antichrist) and her Seed (Jesus Christ); He (Jesus Christ) shall bruise you (Satan) on the head (through the Cross), and you (Satan) shall bruise Him (Jesus Christ) on the heel (the Cross)."

Colossians 2:15, "When He (God the Father) had disarmed the rulers and authorities (Satanic order of battle), He (God the Father) made a public display of them (Fallen angels), having triumphed over them through Him (Jesus Christ)."

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is a descendant of Abraham and Isaac, has defeated Satan with His death and resurrection and at His Second Advent, He with His church, and the elect angels will imprison Satan and the fallen angels and assume control over planet earth for a thousand years (see Revelation 19:1-20:6).

In relation to the descendants of Isaac, namely, Israel, the term "**enemies**" refers to the heathen nations of the world who are under the influence of the devil who fight against Israel throughout her history. Therefore, this prophecy also refers to the fact that born-again Israel who are descendants of Isaac, will be delivered by Jesus Christ from the armies of the Gentile nations and antichrist during Daniel's seventieth week and will become head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ (see Zechariah 14:16-21).

Genesis 24:61, "Then Rebekah arose with her maids, and they mounted the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed."

The fact that the Scripture records that Rebekah took "**her maids**" with her marks her social status

and indicates that she is not exactly poverty stricken. Rebekah will not take this journey alone but will take a group of women who she was intimate with and who will help ease any homesickness that she might encounter while away from her family.

Abraham's servant Eliezer has accomplished the task that Abraham had given him to secure a wife for Isaac among his relatives and now is coming home with the bride, Rebekah.

Genesis 24:62-63 records Isaac meditating in prayer while awaiting the arrival of his bride.

Genesis 24:62, "Now Isaac had come from going to Beer-lahai-roi; for he was living in the Negev."

"**Beer-lahai-roi**" was the fountain by which the Lord rescued Hagar as recorded in Genesis 16:7, 14 and was located between Kadesh and Bered, about fifty miles southwest of Beersheba.

It was located in the region called the "**Negev**," which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

Abraham who sent Eliezer to secure a bride from among his relatives in northern Mesopotamia is not mentioned here but rather Isaac since it reflects a change of leadership and emphasis to Isaac. The Word of God does not mention the trip back but we can be sure that Rebekah had many questions to ask of Eliezer concerning Isaac since she was now married to him.

Also, we can be sure that Rebekah had many questions concerning the God of Abraham and Isaac and the plan that God had for Rebekah and Isaac.

Genesis 24:63, "Isaac went out to meditate in the field toward evening; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, camels were coming."

"**Meditate**" is the verb *suach* (jWC) (soo-akh) whose basic meaning is "to go over a matter in one's mind" and denotes the concept of meditation in prayer.

The word appears only once in the Old Testament, here in Genesis 24:63 in the qal infinitive form meaning "in order to meditate in prayer."

The meaning is substantiated in that Isaac is said to have "**lifted up his eyes**" implying obviously that his head was down.

This word indicates that Isaac was meditating in prayer concerning his marriage and the bride secured for him by Eliezer among Abraham's relatives.

Undoubtedly, Abraham had informed Isaac of his intention of sending Eliezer to secure a wife for him among his relatives in northern Mesopotamia. Therefore, Isaac was surely interested in the outcome of the matter and was engaged in prayer.

Isaac wanted to be alone with God and reflect upon his upcoming marriage to a woman he had never met! Undoubtedly, Isaac was praying to God that His will would be accomplished in the securing of a bride for him.

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Isaac's prayer was successful because it was according to the will of God.

Biblical meditation takes place in prayer and involves repetitive, reflective, reverential and prayerful reading of the Word of God and making application to one's own life.

Meditation means "the act of focusing one's thoughts, thus to ponder, think about" and consists of reflective thinking or contemplation, usually on a specific subject to discern its meaning or significance or a plan of action.

J.I. Packer gives the following definition of meditation in his book entitled "Knowing God, "Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways, and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of

God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let His truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace. Its effect is to ever humble us as we contemplate God's greatness and glory, and our own littleness and sinfulness, and to encourage and reassure us—"comfort" us in the old, strong Bible sense of the word—as we contemplate the unsearchable riches of divine mercy displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Psalm 119:15, "I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways."

Psalm 119:27, "Make me understand the way of Your precepts, so I will meditate on Your wonders."

Psalm 119:47-48, "I shall delight in Your commandments, which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; And I will meditate on Your statutes."

Biblical meditation consists of reflective thinking or contemplation on the Word of God in order to discern its meaning for the purpose of making personal application.

Biblical meditation is superior to cosmic meditation by virtue of the object of meditation since the former has an object whereas the latter does not. Cosmic meditation has many forms and is essentially an attempt to empty the human mind in order to enable the kingdom of darkness to control the soul whereas Biblical meditation is object oriented and that object is the Bible.

Objectives of Biblical Meditation:

(1) Fellowship with God: Communion with God.

1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

(2) Worship of God: Responding to the Word of God.

John 4:23-24, "But an hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers, will worship the

Father spiritually, yes, by means of truth. In fact, the Father intensely desires such worshippers of Himself. God, as to His nature, is spirit and those worshipping Him must worship spiritually, yes, by means of truth.'

(3) Instruction from God: Learning the will of the Father.

Proverbs 23:23, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding."

(4) Motivation from God: Inspire the believer to courageous service.

1 Peter 4:10, "As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

(5) Transformation from God: Divine viewpoint and perspective.

Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."

Biblical meditation can take place day and night.

Psalm 1:1-2, "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night."

The believer should set aside time for Bible study and reflecting upon the Word in prayer. He must adjust his schedule to have time to meditate upon the Word of God in prayer. The believer must adjust his priorities in order have an effective use of meditation upon the Word in prayer.

The distractions of the cosmic system seek to take the believer away from meditating upon the Word of God.

Biblical Meditation gets our eyes off of self and our problems and on God's Person, provisions and protection, thus puts our problems in proper perspective. The pressures in our lives begin to dissipate when we are secluded, silent and still before the Lord. When we meditate upon the Lord, we see things from a different perspective.

Meditation brings us to a position in which we can see ourselves in the light of God's Word of truth (Ps. 36:9; Eph. 1:17-18). Meditating upon the Lord can get us to relax and helps believers go to sleep in a peaceful and relaxed manner in spite of difficult circumstances.

Principles of the Biblical Meditation:

(1) Review the past: Review how God has operated in your life in the past.

Psalm 143:5-6, "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your doings; I muse on the work of Your hands. I stretch out my hands to You; My soul longs for You, as a parched land. Selah."

(2) Reflect on God: Reflect upon the attributes of God.

Psalm 63:6-8, "When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me."

(3) Remember God's promises: Remember God's promises of His provision and protection.

Lamentations 3:20, "Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me."

(4) Request: Make a prayer request of God.

Philippians 4:6, 7

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

"And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

(5) Reading: Read your Bible.

Isaiah 34:16, "Seek from the book of the LORD, and read."

(6) Reflecting: Reflect upon the statements of Scripture.

Joshua 1:8, "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written

in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."

(7) Responding: Respond to the Word by making personal application.

Philippians 4:8, 9

"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

"The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you."

Requirements for Biblical Meditation:

(1) Take time: Set aside time to contemplate God and to listen to Him.

Psalm 85:8, "I will hear what God the LORD will say."

(2) Stillness: Be still and concentrate upon the Lord (Ps. 46:10).

Psalm 4:4, "Tremble, and do not sin; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah."

(3) Seclusion: Be alone with God in seclusion (Mk. 1:35).

Mark 1:35, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."

(4) Silence: Don't talk but listen to God (Is. 30:15).

Psalm 62:1, "My soul waits in silence for God only; From Him is my salvation."

(5) Discipline: Don't let your mind wander but focus on the Lord (1 C. 9:27).

Proverbs 7:24, "Now therefore, my sons, listen to me, and pay attention to the words of my mouth."

(6) Submission: Permit God to deal with problems in your life (Ja. 4:10).

James 4:10, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."

Hindrances to Biblical Meditation:

(1) Cosmic viewpoint: Materialism, secularism, activism, religion and legalism.

1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

(2) Sin nature: Laziness, sensuality, emotionalism, and procrastination.

Proverbs 19:15, "Laziness casts into a deep sleep, and an idle man will suffer hunger."

(3) Self-centered arrogance: Poor methods of interpretation, emotional response for application, unrealistic expectations of instant results, wrong objectives (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

(4) Family and occupation: Responsibilities, problems, successes, social life and pleasure (Luke 14:7-24).

In Genesis 24:64-67, we have the record of Rebekah's arrival with Eliezer and the consummation of her marriage to Isaac.

Genesis 24:64, "Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from the camel."

Rebekah dismounts from her camel in order to show respect to her intended husband (Josh. 15:18; 1 Sam. 25:23).

The Word of God commands Christian wives to show respect for their husbands.

Colossians 3:18, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

1 Peter 3:1, "In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives."

Genesis 24:65, "She said to the servant, 'Who is that man walking in the field to meet us?' And

the servant said, 'He is my master.' Then she took her veil and covered herself."

Rebekah veils herself only to identify herself to Isaac that she is the bride and this was not done by the women of the patriarchs (see Genesis 12:14; 38:14), although it was customary to veil the bride in the marriage ceremony.

Genesis 24:66, "The servant told Isaac all the things that he had done."

Genesis 24:66 records that Abraham's servant Eliezer "told all the things that he had done," which means that he recounted for Isaac his mission and God's providence in directing him to Rebekah and the response of Rebekah and her family to his proposal of marriage to Rebekah.

Eliezer would have told Isaac of the character of Rebekah that she displayed to him, which identified her as the one that God had designed for him and he would have told him of Rebekah's great physical beauty as well.

Proverbs 12:4a, "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown."

Proverbs 18:22, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD."

Proverbs 31:10, "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."

This report from Eliezer concerning the character and beauty of Rebekah would give Isaac assurance that she was his wife that God had designed for him. The fact that the Word of God records that Eliezer gives a report to Isaac and not Abraham does not mean that Abraham was dead since he lived another twenty-five years (see Genesis 21:5; 25:7, 9, 20).

The Word of God omits Eliezer's report to Abraham because the emphasis in this point in the narrative is upon Isaac and indicates that Isaac is the successor of Abraham and Rebekah the successor of Sarah in the plan of God.

Genesis 24:67, "Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

The fact that Isaac was said to be “**comforted after his mother’s death**” indicates that he was very close to Sarah and was a “momma’s boy.” This statement demonstrates the deep psychological insight Moses must have had into human nature.

In a normal, mother and son relationship, the death of a man’s mother is one of the hardest separations to bear and there is in marriage a fulfillment of the love a boy learned from his mother. Isaac found the consolation he had looked for after Sarah’s death in his life with Rebekah.

The fact that Rebekah was brought by Isaac into his mother Sarah’s tent, a place of honor, identifies to the patriarchal household that she is the successor to Sarah. Isaac brought Rebekah into Sarah’s tent since it would have been improper of him to immediately bring her into his own tent before the marriage ceremony.

The statement “**he (Isaac) took Rebekah and she became his wife**” means that Isaac and Rebekah consummated their marriage through sexual intercourse.

The statement “**he (Isaac) loved her (Rebekah)**” refers to the personal love and affection and emotional involvement that existed from the beginning between Isaac and Rebekah as husband and wife.

Do you notice that personal love and affection, romance came last, not first, in this chapter?

Isaac learned to love his wife in time since for him romance came after marriage, not before it, which leads me to a principle: Romantic love is never the basis for marriage, but rather marriage is the basis for romantic love. Personal love and affection, i.e. romance follows rather than prompts the sexual union, which is the case in arranged marriages and not in marriages that are not arranged. In this arranged marriage, romance is the fruit of the marriage and the sexual union and not the basis for it.

The fact that Rebekah was brought to Isaac follows the pattern of the first marriage between Adam and Ishshah.

Genesis 2:18-23

“Then the LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.’”

“Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.”

“The man gave names to all the cattle (*b^ehemah*, “domestic animals”), and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast (*chayyath*, “wild animals”) of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him.”

“So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs (Hebrew: *mitsal’othav*, “portion of his side”) and closed up the flesh at that place.”

“The LORD God fashioned (Hebrew: *banah*, “to build, construct”) into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.”

“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.’”

“**Woman**” is the noun *ishshah* (hv*ʾa!), which denotes the woman as the physical counterpart of man and is used in the sense of a wife to whom the man is to be completely committed.

The fact that Adam was asleep while the Lord surgically removed a portion of his side for the construction of his wife is a lesson to Christian men who are single that when the Lord provides a wife, it will be painless.

The fact that the woman was constructed from a portion of Adam’s side and not from his head to rule over him, nor from his feet to be trampled upon by him, indicates that she was to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.

Genesis 2:24, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

The phrase “**become one flesh**” refers to the fact that there was a complete identification of

personality between Adam and the woman in interests, pursuits, which was consummated in sexual intercourse.

Genesis 2:25, "And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed."

Notice, also that Adam was created first and then Eve thus constituting a divine order between the sexes meaning that the man was designed to be the authority over the woman even though she was his equal (1 Tim. 2:12-14; 1 Cor. 11:1-12).

1 Corinthians 11:3, "But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ."

Since the Lord Jesus Christ arranged the first marriage and designed it for all members of the entire human race, both believers and unbelievers, it is therefore, to be honored.

Hebrews 13:5, "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge."

The "directive" will of God is that marriage was originally designed to be a life long commitment (Gen. 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6) but the "permissive" will of God has permitted divorce because of the fallen nature of man and negative volition to the Word of God on the part of one or both partners (Matt. 19:7-8).

Matthew 19:7, 8

"They said to Him, 'Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?'"

"He said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way.'"

An example where the Lord permitted a believer to divorce his wife and remarry is Moses who according to Exodus 18:2 divorced his first wife Zipporah because she refused to obey the Lord's commandment to circumcise his boys (Ex. 4:25; Lev. 12:2-3) and according to Numbers 12:1, Moses got remarried to a Cushite woman.

Husbands and wives are commanded in the Word of God to not withhold sex from each other but rather are to fulfill each other's needs since the husband has authority over his wife's body and the wife has authority over her husbands.

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

"Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman."

"But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband."

"The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband."

"The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does."

"Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

Now, from a comparison of 1 Corinthians 7:2 with Genesis 2:18, we can see that there are three basic reasons for the institution of marriage.

(1) Genesis 2:18, "It is not good for the man to be alone."

(2) Genesis 2:18b, "I will make him a helper suitable for him."

(3) 1 Corinthians 7:2, "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband."

Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun so the church is to reflect the character of Christ and in the same way, Christian marriage is to reflect the loving and caring relationship that exists between Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:22-29

"Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

“For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.”

“But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

“so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.”

“that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.”

“So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.”

“for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.”

“**Nourishes**” is the verb *ektrepho* (ε)ktrevfw), which refers to feeding and providing for your wife as you would your own physical body.

“**Cherishes**” is the verb *thalpo* (qavlpw), which refers to comforting and caring, for your wife as you would your own body, and suggests regarding or treating your wife as an object of affection and as valuable to you.

Ephesians 5:30-33

“because we are members of His body.”

“FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.”

“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.”

“Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

“**Respects**” is the verb *phobeo* (fovbo\$), which refers to not only honoring your husband but also

treating him as a friend and fellow heir of the grace of life.

Principles from Rebekah and Isaac’s Marriage

There are several principles on marriage that we can extrapolate from this study of Isaac and Rebekah’s marriage.

For those of us who are not married or who are and have children who must face this choice, a number of principles can be extrapolated from this story of the selection of a wife for Isaac.

First, for a Christian, a godly or spiritual mate should be sought only when it is certain that marriage will achieve the purposes God has for our lives. Isaac needed a wife because he must become a husband and father to fulfill his part in the outworking of the Abrahamic covenant. While it is the norm for men to marry, let us not forget that the Bible informs us that it is sometimes God’s purpose to keep some of His servants single as illustrated by the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 7:8-24.

In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul is addressing definite questions about marriage and is not attempting to present the complete doctrine on marriage. He addresses three different groups of believers in this chapter.

1 Corinthians 7:1-11 addresses the first group who are Christians married to Christians and their question was, “Is celibacy more spiritual than marriage, is it ok to be celibate?”

1 Corinthians 7:1-11

“Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman.”

“But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband.”

The phrase “because of immoralities” reveals one of the purposes of marriage.

The phrase “each man is to have his own wife, each woman is to have her own husband” prohibits homosexual marriage.

“The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.”

“The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”

“Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

The prohibition, “stop depriving one another” teaches that sex is not to be used as a weapon.

“But this I say by way of concession, not of command.”

This passage means that celibacy is permitted but not commanded.

“Yet I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner, and another in that.”

In 1 Corinthians 7:8-9, Paul addresses briefly unmarried Christians and is applying the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:1, if you cannot control yourself, don’t fornicate, but marry.

“But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I.”

“But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 addresses the topic of divorce.

1 Corinthians 7:10, “But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband.”

1 Corinthians 7:11, “(but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife.”

1 Corinthians 7:12-24 addresses the second group in Corinth who were Christians married to unbelievers and their question is, “Must Christians remain married to the unsaved partner, does our conversion alter things?”

1 Corinthians 7:12, “But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is

an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her.”

Paul is not disclaiming divine inspiration by saying “**I say, not the Lord**” but rather he is referring to what Jesus taught when He was on earth (See Matthew 5:31-32; 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12; Luke 16:18). Paul had to answer questions that Jesus never discussed but when a question arose that the Lord dealt with, Paul referred to His words.

1 Corinthians 7:13, 14

“And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away.”

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.”

The term “**sanctified**” means that the believer exerts a spiritual influence in the home that can lead to salvation of the lost partner.

1 Corinthians 7:15-17

“Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace.”

“For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?”

“Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.”

1 Corinthians 7:18-20 teaches that Gentiles who are uncircumcised should not seek to be Jews since there are no racial distinctions during the church age according to 1 Corinthians 12:13 and Galatians 3:26-28.

1 Corinthians 7:18-20

“Was any man called when he was already circumcised? He is not to become uncircumcised. Has anyone been called in uncircumcision? He is not to be circumcised.”

“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God.”

“Each man must remain in that condition in which he was called.”

Salvation does not change your marriage state.

1 Corinthians 7:21-24

“Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.”

“For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.”

“You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.”

“Brethren, each one is to remain with God in that condition in which he was called.”

1 Corinthians 7:25-40 addresses the third group in Corinth who were unmarried Christians and their question was, “must a Christian get married, what about the unmarried women in the church who are not getting any younger (see 1 Corinthians 7:36)?”

In this passage Paul taught the unmarried Christians to consider several factors. The first is contained in 1 Corinthians 7:25-31, namely, the impending crisis in Corinth.

1 Corinthians 7:25, 26

“Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.”

“I think then that this is good in view of the present distress, that it is good for a man to remain as he is.”

“**Present distress**” refers to impending persecution.

1 Corinthians 7:27-31

“Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.”

“But if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Yet such will

have trouble in this life, and I am trying to spare you.”

“But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none.”

“and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess.”

“and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.”

The second factor Paul wanted the unmarried Corinthians to consider was to face the responsibilities and tribulations that go with marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:32-35

“But I want you to be free from concern. One who is unmarried is concerned about the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord.”

“but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and his interests are divided. The woman who is unmarried, and the virgin, is concerned about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and spirit; but one who is married is concerned about the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”

“This I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is appropriate and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.”

The third factor that Paul wanted the unmarried to consider was that each situation is unique.

1 Corinthians 7:36, “But if any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter, if she is past her youth, and if it must be so, let him do what he wishes, he does not sin; let her marry.”

“**She is past her youth**” means that the girl is getting older and the danger for her is that she

might rush into marriage to avoid becoming a “spinster.”

1 Corinthians 7:37, 38

“But he who stands firm in his heart, being under no constraint, but has authority over his own will, and has decided this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, he will do well.”

“So then both he who gives his own virgin daughter in marriage does well, and he who does not give her in marriage will do better.”

The last factor Paul wanted the unmarried to consider is that marriage is for life.

1 Corinthians 7:39, 40

“A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”

“But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.”

In summary, each person must ask himself or herself the following questions if marriage is being contemplated: (1) What is my gift from God? (2) Am I marrying a believer? (3) Are the circumstances such that marriage is right? (4) How will marriage affect my service for Christ? (5) Am I prepared to enter this union for life?

So marriage should only be sought for those who will achieve God’s purpose by having a mate and, perhaps, a family.

Second, if we would have a godly mate we must wait for God’s time. Too many times I have seen Christian men and women marrying hastily, fearing that the time for marriage was quickly passing them by, eventually married to unbelievers or uncommitted Christians because they concluded that anyone was better than no one.

Remember, Isaac was forty years old when he married, which by some standards was about ten years too late (cf. Genesis 11:14, 18, 22). Don’t marry hastily and don’t marry from a position of weakness meaning don’t marry because of fear of being alone since that is wrong motivation for

marriage. It is well worth waiting for the mate of God’s choice.

Psalms 27:14, “Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”

Third, if we desire a spiritual partner we must look in the right place. Abraham instructed his servant not to look for a wife among the Canaanites since he knew that his relatives revered and respected God and that their offspring would share a common faith.

I do not know why Christians think they will find a godly mate in a singles bar or some other such place. If we wish to marry a Christian who is serious about his relationship with God then we must go to where they are, namely, actively serving in the local church. If God does not provide one in this way, He can certainly do so in His own sovereign way.

Fourth, if you would desire to have a spiritual mate you must seek spiritual or Christ-like qualities in the person.

Proverbs 31:10, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.”

Did you notice that Abraham’s servant did not evaluate Rebekah on the basis of her physical appearance but if he had she would have passed with flying colors (cf. 24:16)? To the servant beauty was a desirable thing, but it was not fundamental for the woman he sought must be one who trusted in the God of Abraham and who had maintained sexual purity.

Fundamentally, she must be a woman who manifested Christian character as reflected in her response to the request for water. This servant knew from experience and wisdom the qualities which are most important to a successful marriage.

Just being a woman who believed in the God of Abraham was not sufficient and just because one is a Christian does not make them a good candidate for marriage.

Fifth, he who would find a spiritual partner should be willing to heed the counsel of older and wiser Christians. Did you notice how little Isaac had to do with the process of finding a wife? If left to himself Isaac may never have found Rebekah

since he might have fallen for the first pretty girl or woman to profess a faith in Jesus Christ, thinking that would be adequate but Abraham's servant Eliezer was unwilling to settle for second rate.

Not only were Abraham and his servant a part of the process, but Rebekah's family also had to be convinced of God's leading. So anyone who fails to heed the counsel of spiritually mature Christians is on the path to heartache.

Finally, he who desires a spiritual partner must be willing to put emotional feelings last. Look again with me at Genesis 24:67: Genesis 24:67, "Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and he took Rebekah, and she became his wife, and he loved her; thus Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

Do you notice that personal love and affection, romance came last, not first, in this chapter? Isaac learned to love his wife in time since for him romance came after marriage, not before it, which leads me to a principle: Romantic love is never the basis for marriage, but rather marriage is the basis for romantic love.

Here we see a good reason for a Christian making the decision never to date an unbeliever.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?"

A Christian should carefully screen any person before he or she would even consider going out on a date with them. Dating frequently leads to emotional involvement and physical attraction.

Romantic love is a wonderful emotional feeling, but it will never sustain a marriage and so do not put yourself in a situation where romantic love can grow until you are certain that you want it to grow.

Everything in our culture runs contrary to this principle since romantic feelings are exploited by the media and are continually set before us by them in an exciting light.

Romance is a wonderful thing, a gift from God, but let romance come last, not first, if we would find a spiritual partner.

I believe that God has a special person chosen from eternity past as a mate for those for whom He has purposed marriage. I believe that God will surely guide us to that mate by using Scripture, prayer, counsel, wisdom, and providential intervention. I believe that we will be able to recognize this person, convinced most of all by the fact that they have manifested Christ-like character. Therefore, we must pray to the Father to help us to encourage our children and our friends to trust God and obey Him in the selection of a mate. For those of who are married, pray that the Father would enable you to be the godly mate that His Word says you should be.

Typology of Genesis 24

The marriage of Isaac and Rebekah typifies or foreshadows the marriage of Christ and the Church.

A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ. Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between two historical entities.

Therefore, we see that the historical events of the securing of a bride for Isaac and his marriage to Rebekah "parallels" the historical events of the Holy Spirit securing a bride for Jesus Christ, which is the Church and His marriage to the Church.

As we have studied in Genesis 21, the miraculous birth of Isaac parallels and foreshadows the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 22, we studied that Isaac was uniquely born meaning born to parents who were advanced in age, which typifies the fact that Jesus Christ was uniquely born since He was born of a virgin.

We also studied in Genesis 22 that Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac on Mount Moriah typified or portrayed God the Father, who "**spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all**" (Romans 8:32). By willingly laying himself upon

the altar in obedience to his father Abraham, Isaac typified or portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ who was “**obedient unto death**” (Philippians 2:8).

The altar portrayed or foreshadowed the Cross of Calvary and the burnt offering portrays Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross as propitiating the Father (1 John 2:2; 4:10).

In Genesis 22, we also studied that God’s intervention in preventing Abraham from sacrificing Isaac and thus sparing the life of Isaac was a type of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In Genesis 24, Abraham portrays God the Father, his servant Eliezer portrays God the Holy Spirit, Isaac portrays the Lord Jesus Christ and Rebekah portrays the Church.

The fact that Abraham sent his servant Eliezer to secure a bride for his son Isaac in far away northern Mesopotamia portrays God the Father sending the Holy Spirit from heaven to planet earth to secure a bride for His Son Jesus Christ and which bride is composed of born again believers in the church age.

The Greek term translated “**church**” in your English Bibles is the noun *ekklesia* (e)kklhsiva), which literally means, “called out ones” since it is composed of the preposition *ek* (e)k), “out from” and the verb *kaleo* (kalevw), “to call.”

This ministry of the Holy Spirit of calling out a bride for Jesus Christ is called “the Baptism of the Spirit.” At the moment of salvation the omnipotence of God the Holy Spirit takes the believer out of the domain of the kingdom of darkness and sin and Satan’s power and places them in union with Jesus Christ. This union with Christ makes the believer a member of the body of Christ and future bride of Christ since this union permanently identifies them with Christ in His crucifixion (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 6:14), death (Rom. 6:8), burial (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), resurrection (Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1) and session (Eph. 2:6).

1 Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.”

The apostle Paul teaches that the church is engaged to Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:2, “For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, so that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.”

The apostle Paul teaches that it is a “**mystery**” that the church is the bride of Christ meaning it was unknown to the Old Testament prophets of Israel.

Read Ephesians 5:22-33

Just as Abraham’s servant presented Rebekah to Isaac so the Holy Spirit will present the church to Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:25-27) and the fact that Rebekah was a virgin portrays the purity of the church when she is presented to Christ (Eph. 5:25).

The servant’s “testimony” to Rebekah concerning Abraham and his son Isaac illustrates for us the Holy Spirit’s ministry in calling out the Bride of Christ (cf. John 16:13-14).

The second bestowment of gifts by Abraham’s servant Eliezer to her family portrays the Spirit bestowing upon church age believers spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:1-27).

Abraham’s servant taking Rebekah back with him for Isaac illustrates the “rapture of the church,” which is a technical theological term for the resurrection of the church, which is imminent, invisible to the world, terminating the church age dispensation and securing the church as the bride of Christ.

The “rapture” will take place in the earth’s atmosphere when the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly and forcefully remove the church from planet earth in order to deliver her from the Tribulation period.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

“But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no hope.”

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus.”

“For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until

the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep.”

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of {the} archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.”

“Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.”

“Therefore comfort one another with these words.”

The Lord Jesus Christ was the first one to teach of the rapture, instructing His disciples in His Upper Room Discourse that He would receive them to Himself, which Paul confirms in 2 Thessalonians 2:1 where he teaches that we will be **“gathering together to Him.”**

John 14:2, 3

“In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.”

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, {there} you may be also.”

2 Thessalonians 2:1, “Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him.”

Therefore, since Jesus Christ was the first one to ever teach the doctrine of the rapture or resurrection of the church and was not known to Old Testament saints, the rapture is called a **“mystery.”**

1 Corinthians 15:51, 52

“Behold, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed.”

“in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed.”

The rapture of the church is “immanent” meaning it could take place at any time.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, “Now as to the times and the epochs, brethren, you have no need of anything to be written to you. For you yourselves know full well that the day of the Lord will come just like a thief in the night.”

“**The day of the Lord**” is an extended period of time beginning with God’s dealing with Israel after the rapture at the beginning of the tribulation period and extending through the 2nd Advent of Christ and His millennial reign unto the creation of the new heavens and the new earth after the millennium.

The only way that the Day of the Lord could come as a **“thief in the night,”** unexpected, and unheralded, is if the rapture is imminent. Immanency denotes that Christ could come at any moment, and the uncertainty of the time of that arrival, and that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour.

The purpose of such immanency is that the Church may be in a constant state of expectancy, always looking for and waiting for the coming of her Lord from heaven.

Titus 2:13, “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 3:20, 21

“For our citizenship exists from eternity past in the realm of the heavens, out from which also we ourselves at the present time are eagerly anticipating as Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

“Who will cause our humiliating body to be outwardly transformed to be identical in essence with His glorious body because of the power that will enable Him to marshal all things created to Himself.”

The immanency of the rapture of the church is designed to motivate the church to perform good works that are divine in quality and to do the Father’s will.

1 John 3:2, 3

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

“And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.”

The marriage of the church to Jesus Christ will take place in heaven while simultaneously the Tribulation period is taking place on planet earth.

Revelation 19:7-9

“Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

“It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.”

“Then he said to me, ‘Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’ And he said to me, ‘These are true words of God.’”

Genesis 25

Genesis 25:1-4 records Abraham’s marriage to Keturah, which produced six sons. Also, Genesis 25:5-6 records the distribution of Abraham’s estate. This passage records Abraham sending away his sons who were born to him through Keturah with gifts but giving all of his estate to Isaac, thus by doing so he made Isaac his sole heir, which was in accordance with the will of God.

Genesis 15:4, “Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ‘This man (Eliezer) will not be your heir; but one (Isaac) who will come forth from your own body, he (Isaac) shall be your heir.”

So before concluding Abraham’s story, the narrator, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit presents the final details concerning Abraham’s children and the settling of his affairs before his death.

Genesis 25:1-4 presents the genealogy of Abraham’s children by Keturah in order to establish the family relationship between Abraham and the descendants of these children. This segmented genealogy presents sixteen descendants: sons, grandsons and great-grandsons.

Keturah bore Abraham six sons (Genesis 25:2) and through Jokshan, Abraham had two grandsons and three great-grandsons (Genesis 25:3), for a

total of five children of Jokshan and through Midian, Abraham’s fourth son through Keturah, he had five grandsons (Genesis 25:4).

Genesis 25:1, “Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah.”

“**Keturah**” is the proper noun *qoturah* (hr*Wfq()) (ket-oo-raw), which means, “incense” or “enveloped in fragrant smoke” signifying the trade of her sons.

Nahum Sarna has a comment regarding Keturah’s name and the trade of her sons, “There was a universal and sustained demand in the ancient world for frankincense, myrrh and other aromatic resins and gums. These were needed for the requirements of the cult, for the manufacture of medicines and in the preparation and preservation of food. The prime source and producer was southern Arabia, especially the Hadramaut region, which is modern Yemen, the most fertile part of the Arabian Peninsula. Because of her name, it is reasonable to assume that the key factor behind the organization of the Keturah tribes was the spice trade—the production, shipment and distribution of this precious commodity. It so happens that both biblical and Assyrian sources mention many of the names here listed as those peoples or localities involved in this particular branch of international commerce. They controlled the trade routes that led from the Arabian Peninsula to the lands of the Fertile Crescent. This accounts for the picture of such widespread geographical diffusion of the Keturahs from southern Arabia to the Middle Euphrates region and northern Syria” (The JPS Torah Commentary, page 171, The Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 25:1 records that Abraham made Keturah his wife but 1 Chronicles 1:32 records that Keturah was his concubine.

1 Chronicles 1:32, “The sons born to Keturah, Abraham’s concubine: Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.”

This apparent contradiction is reconciled when we understand that a concubine was considered in Abraham’s day to be a “second-class wife,” acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights.

In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be sent away with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

Some Bible commentators believe that Abraham married Keturah and had these six boys by her while Sarah was still alive and before he had Isaac and they cite the advanced age of Abraham to substantiate their argument. But if you recall, God rejuvenated Abraham so that he could procreate with Sarah and it appears that Abraham became prolific as a result of this demonstration of divine power on his behalf.

Those who believe Abraham couldn't have fathered these children with Keturah after the death of Sarah cite Romans 4:19 as evidence of this.

Romans 4:19, "Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb."

But Romans 4:19 was written before the Lord gave him and Sarah the ability to procreate and therefore records Abraham's attitude prior to having Isaac. Therefore, these commentators believe that the Lord gave Abraham the ability to procreate at a hundred years of age for the sole purpose of fulfilling His promise to Abraham that he and Sarah would have a child in their advanced age.

But this ignores the Lord's promises in Genesis 17:5-6 that Abraham would be a "**father of a multitude of nations**," which resulted in the change of his name by God to "**Abraham**."

Genesis 17:4, "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations."

Genesis 17:5, "No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations."

Therefore, we see that the Lord gave Abraham the ability to procreate after a hundred years of age

not only so that he could have Isaac but also so that he could truly become the father of a multitude of nations.

Not only was Abraham the father of the nations that originated with his six sons through Keturah but also he was the father of the nations that originated with Ishmael whom he had with Hagar (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18).

Genesis 25:7 records that Abraham was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died and Genesis 23:1 records that Sarah was one hundred and twenty seven years old when she died, thus making Abraham one hundred thirty seven years old when Sarah died since Genesis 17:17 records that Sarah was ten years younger than Abraham.

Therefore, if we do the math we can see that since Abraham was one hundred seventy when he died and one hundred thirty seven years of age when Sarah died that this would have given him thirty seven years to produce these six boys with Keturah.

Furthermore, the *waw*-consecutive beginning Genesis 25:1 indicates that the events recorded in Genesis 25 "follow" the events recorded in Genesis 23-24, namely, the death of Sarah in Genesis 23 and the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac in Genesis 24.

Also, the verb *laqach* (jq^l*), "**took**" and the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*), "to add" and is translated "**another**" indicates that Abraham "took an additional" wife after the death of Sarah.

Also, another reason why Abraham would not have had another concubine in addition to Hagar while Sarah was alive was that it is clear from Sarah's attitude toward Hagar and Ishmael that she would not have tolerated another concubine and furthermore, it appears that Abraham was monogamous.

Genesis 25:2, "**She bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah.**"

Genesis 25:2 records that Abraham and Keturah had six sons who became ancestors of tribes that lived in the area east of the Dead Sea and in Arabia.

The oldest son of Abraham and Keturah is “**Zimran**” (/r*m+w!) (zim-rawn) whose name means, “wild sheep” or “wild goat.”

We are not sure of the location where Zimran and his descendants settled but Pliny mentions an Arabian tribe called “Zamareni” (Natural History 6.32.158), while Ptolemaeus (6, 7, 5) mentions a town near Mecca called “Zambran.”

The second of the six sons of Keturah was “**Jokshan**” (/v*q+y*) (yok-shawn) whose name means, “snarer” and who is identified primarily by his two sons Sheba and Dedan.

The third son of Abraham and Keturah was “**Medan**” (/d*m+) (med-awn) whose name means, “contention” and whose descendants shipped spices from Gilead to Egypt (Gen. 37:36) and are grouped along with the Ishmaelites (Gen. 37:25) and the Midianites (Gen. 37:28) in this trade.

The fourth son is “**Midian**” (/y*d+m!) (Hebrew: *midhyan* pronounced mid-yawn) whose name means, “strife” and whose descendants were a well-known Arabian tribe east of the Gulf of Aqabah and the Red Sea.

They traded in gold and incense according to Isaiah 60:6, Genesis 37:25, 28, and did this from Moab to Sinai and Ephah according to Numbers 22:4, 7, Judges 6-8.

The first wife of Moses, Zipporah was a Midianite and her brother Hobab guided Israel through the steppe of Sinai (Num. 10:29-32) and later, Midianites in association with the Moabites fought Israel (Num. 25; 31:1-12) and Gideon drove them out of Israel (Judges 7-8).

The fifth son is “**Ishbak**” (qB*v+y!) (Hebrew: *yishbaq* pronounced yish-bawk) whose name means, “he releases” and whose descendants are identified as “Iasbuq” in a monolith inscription of Shalmaneser III (858-824 B.C.) indicating that his descendants settled in northern Syria.

The sixth and final son of Abraham and Keturah is “**Shuah**” (jWv) (Hebrew: *shuach* pronounced shoo-akh) whose name means, “wealth” and whose descendants settled on the middle Euphrates between Babylon and Mari.

Genesis 25:3, “Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim.”

The first son of Jokshan and first grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Sheba**” (ab*v+) (Hebrew: *sh^eva* pronounced she-vaw) whose name means, “seven” or “oath” and whose descendants settled in the southwestern portion of the Arabian Peninsula.

The land of Sheba was known for its gold according to Psalm 72:15 as well as incense and calamus according to Isaiah 60:6 and Jeremiah 6:20.

The second son of Jokshan and second grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Dedan**” (/d*D+) (Hebrew: *d^edhan* pronounced ded-awn) whose name means, “low country” and whose descendants settled in northwest Arabia and were famous for their role in the caravan trade (Isa. 21:13; Ezek. 27:20).

The “**Sheba**” and “**Dedan**” mentioned in Genesis 10:7 are not the same “**Sheba**” and “**Dedan**” of Genesis 25:3 since the father of the former was “**Ramah**.” The sons of Ramah of Genesis 10:7 were evidently famous since Jokshan names his two boys after them.

The names “**Asshurim, Letushim**” and “**Leummim**” are all in the plural indicating that they are not personal names but rather that they are the descendants of the men they are named after.

The first son of Dedan and grandson of Jokshan and great grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Asshuri**” (Hebrew: *ashshuri* pronounced ash-shoo-ree) whose descendants are called here “**Asshurim**” (syr!WV/a^) (Hebrew: *ashshurim* pronounced ash-shoo-reem) and whose name means, “steps.”

The “**Asshurim**” settled near Egypt and were known from South Arabian inscriptions.

The second son of Dedan and grandson of Jokshan and great grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Letushi**” (let-oo-shee) whose name means “craftsman” and whose descendants are identified in Genesis 25:3 as the “**Letushim**” (syv!Wfl+)

(Hebrew: *l'tushim* pronounced let-oo-sheem) and who settled in Arabia.

The third son of Dedan and grandson of Jokshan and great grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “Lehummi” (leh-oom-mee) whose descendants are identified here as the “**Leummim**” (syM!a | |+) (Hebrew: *l'ummim* pronounced leh-oom-meem), the name means, “people” and they settled somewhere in Arabia.

Genesis 25:4, “The sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah.”

The first son of Midian and grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Ephah**” (hp*yu@) (Hebrew: *`ephah* pronounced ay-faw) whose name means, “gloomy” and whose descendants are identified in Assyrian inscriptions as the “Haiappa.”

The “Annals of Sargon” (721-705 B.C.E.) list the “Haiappa” together with other Arab tribes whose lived in the region of the Red Sea coast.

The second son of Midian and grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Epher**” (rp#u@) (Hebrew: *`epher* pronounced ay-fer) whose name means, “young gazelle.”

The location of where “**Epher**” and his descendants settled has not been identified as of yet.

The third son of Midian and grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Hanoch**” (En^j*) (Hebrew: *chanokh* pronounced khan-oke) whose name means, “dedicated.”

The location of where “**Hanoch**” and his descendants settled has not been unidentified as of yet.

The fourth son of Midian and grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Abida**” (ud*yb!a() (Hebrew: *`avidha* pronounced a-vee-daw) whose name means, “my father knows.”

We know nothing about “**Abida**” and his descendants and where they settled at this particular time.

The fifth and final son of Midian and who was a grandson of Abraham and Keturah was “**Eldaah**”

(hu*D*!+a#) (Hebrew: *`eld`ah* pronounced el-daw-aw) whose name means, “God has known.”

Like “**Epher**” “**Hanoch**” “**Abida**,” “**Eldaah**” is unattested.

The repetition of Keturah’s name frames the genealogy.

Genesis 25:5-6, “Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac, but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the east.”

Genesis 25:5-6 records Abraham making Isaac his sole heir. Ordinarily Isaac would only be entitled to a double portion of the inheritance, with the rest divided up among the other sons of Abraham. But since the Lord commanded Abraham that Isaac would be the one to carry on the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ, Isaac inherited everything owned by Abraham after he died. Therefore, just as Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away so Abraham sent away these sons through Keturah and away from Isaac to the land east of the Canaan, that is, Arabia.

Even though he sent them away, Abraham still took care of them and gave them gifts, which would serve as their inheritance. Sons of a full wife like Isaac could expect a definite share of the inheritance but sons of a concubine were dependent upon their father’s graciousness.

Abraham was not legally required to give these boys a gift but he did so out of the goodness of his heart. The gifts to the sons of Keturah were not only a gesture of generosity but also designed to secure the goodwill of Keturah’s sons toward Isaac or in compensation for their surrender of future claims.

“**Concubine**” is the Hebrew word *pileghesh* (vg#l#P!) (Hebrew: *pileghesh* pronounced: pee-leh-ghesh) and is in the plural indicating that Abraham not only gave gifts to the six sons that he had with Keturah but he also took care of Ishmael whom he had with Hagar.

Genesis 25:7-11 records the death of Abraham and completes the sixth book in Genesis. The sixth book in Genesis is contained in 11:27-25:11 presenting the account of Terah’s line and has

three sections: (1) Introduction (11:27b-32) (2) Main body (12:1-22:19) (3) Transition to the next section of the book of Genesis and generation (22:20-25:11). Therefore, Genesis 25:7-11 completes the third and final section of the sixth book, which prepares the reader for a shift from Abraham's leadership to Isaac's and from Sarah to Rebekah.

Genesis 25:7, "These are all the years of Abraham's life that he lived, one hundred and seventy-five years."

Abraham lived one hundred years in the Promised Land, the land of Canaan since Abraham according to Genesis 12:4, Abraham departed Haran and arrived in Canaan when he was seventy-five years of age.

Genesis 12:4, "So Abram went forth as the LORD had spoken to him; and Lot went with him. Now Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran."

Even though Abraham lived one hundred years in the land of Canaan, the only piece of land he owned was a burial plot.

Since Abraham was one hundred and seventy-five years old when he died, Isaac therefore, was seventy-five years of age since Abraham was one hundred years of age when Isaac was born.

Also, Abraham lived to see his grandchildren Esau and Jacob grow up to be fifteen years of age since Isaac was sixty years of age when Rebekah gave birth to Esau and Jacob according to Genesis 25:26 and he was seventy-five when his father Abraham died.

Genesis 25:8, "Abraham breathed his last and died in a ripe old age, an old man and satisfied with life; and he was gathered to his people."

"Breathed his last" is the verb *gawa* (UW^G*) (gaw-vaw), which pictures the act of drawing one's last breath.

"Died" is the verb *muth* (tWm) (mooth), which denotes the general act of dying.

"Old age" is the noun *sevah* (hb*yC@), which denotes that Abraham enjoyed an abundant "quantity" of life.

"Old man" is the noun *zaqen* (/q@Z*) (zaw-cane), which denotes that Abraham enjoyed an abundant "quality" of life.

"Satisfied with life" is the adjective *savea* (u^b@c*) (saw-vay-aw), which means, "satiated, full of days" and denotes the fact that all Abraham's needs and expectations had been satisfied as a result of living a life that was pleasing to the Lord.

The fact that Abraham is said to have **"died in a ripe old age; an old man satisfied with life"** was a fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:15.

Genesis 15:15, "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age."

The statement that Abraham **"died in a ripe old age, an old man satisfied with life"** emphasizes that Abraham not only lived a long life but that he lived a life full of contentment and was fulfilled. The statement emphasizes that Abraham died not only at an elderly age but in a frame of mind filled with inner peace and contentment and satisfaction.

The fact that Abraham was said to be **"gathered to his people"** does "not" refer to his death and burial because he was not buried with his ancestors. But rather the statement **"gathered to his people"** refers to his life after death with those who before him died in faith such as Adam, Abel, Enoch, and Noah in a compartment of Hades called "Paradise," which the Lord Jesus Christ referred to as **"Abraham's bosom"** in Luke 16.

Hades (NT) or Sheol (OT) contains four compartments: (1) Paradise: the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to heaven after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:10). (2) Torments: the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from all dispensations (Lk. 16:19-31) who will be transferred to the Great White Throne Judgment that concludes human history and from there will be cast in the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). (3) Tartarus: the abode of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who had sex with woman in order to corrupt the human race and prevent the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 4; Jude

6). (4) The Abyss: the place of imprisonment for the demons who violated certain rules for angelic creation and will be released during the Tribulation (Lk. 8:30-31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 20:1-3).

Prior to the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints when they died did not go to the third heaven but rather to Paradise. These Old Testament saints such as Abraham ascended with Jesus Christ into heaven as part of our Lord's triumphal procession as victor in the angelic conflict and were part of the booty from our Lord's victory that was accomplished through His death and resurrection.

Ephesians 4:8, "Therefore it says, 'WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.'"

"He led host a host of captives" refers to Old Testament saints that were temporarily residing in the second compartment of Hades called Paradise (Lk. 16; 23:43).

Genesis 25:9-10, "Then his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, facing Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth; there Abraham was buried with Sarah his wife."

Genesis 25:9 records that Isaac and Ishmael buried their father indicating that the two officiated at their father's funeral. The presence of Ishmael at the funeral indicates also that whatever animosity if any there was between the two was over.

Also, Genesis 25:5-6 records that Abraham made Isaac his sole heir but also took care of the children of his "concubines," Hagar and Keturah, which indicates that Ishmael was taken care of by Abraham before his death, thus, insuring that there would not be any animosity between Ishmael and Isaac.

Genesis 23 records that for four hundred shekels of silver, Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite "the cave of Machpelah" as a burial plot for Sarah, himself and his descendants.

The name "Machpelah" means, "double" or "split cave." "Machpelah" is located west of modern Hebron on the outskirts and the city is situated on

the eastern slope of a narrow valley, which runs north and south and is surrounded by rocky hills.

Hebron was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

The cave itself was located at the end of a field and Josephus mentioned a "monument of the patriarchs," which stood in Hebron in the days of Jesus. The cave of Machpelah is the world's most ancient Jewish site and the second holiest place for the Jewish people, after Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

The double cave, a mystery of thousands of years, was uncovered several years ago beneath the massive building, revealing artifacts from the Early Israelite Period (some 30 centuries ago). The structure was built during the Second Temple Period (about two thousand years ago) by Herod, King of Judea, providing a place for gatherings and Jewish prayers at the graves of the Patriarchs. This uniquely impressive building is the only one that stands intact and still fulfills its original function after thousands of years.

Foreign conquerors and invaders used the site for their own purposes, depending on their religious orientation: the Byzantines and Crusaders transformed it into a church and the Muslims rendered it a mosque.

About 700 years ago, the Muslim Mamelukes conquered Hebron, declared the structure a mosque and forbade entry to Jews, who were not allowed past the seventh step on a staircase outside the building.

Upon the liberation of Hebron in 1967, the Chief Rabbi of the Israel Defense Forces, the late Major-General Rabbi Shlomo Goren, was the first Jew to enter the cave of Machpelah. Since then, Jews have been struggling to regain their prayer rights at the site, still run by the Muslim Waqf (Religious Trust) that took control during the Arab conquest.

Many restrictions are imposed on Jewish prayers and customs at the Tomb of the Patriarchs despite the site's significance, primacy and sanctity in Jewish heritage and history.

Over 300,000 people visit the cave annually and is divided into three rooms and presently Jews have no access to the largest room, with the exception of ten days a year.

With this purchase of the cave in the field of Machpelah facing Mamre in Hebron in the land of Canaan, Abraham was renouncing Paddan Aram, that is, northwest Mesopotamia (cf. 25:20), which was brought to the readers attention indirectly by mentioning the relatives of Abraham in Genesis 22:20-24.

Abraham bought this gravesite in the land of Canaan in the confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise to give the land of Canaan to himself and his descendants as a permanent possession.

Not only was Sarah buried at this site but so also were Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there as well (See Genesis 25:9; 35:27, 29, 49:31; 50:13) and all of these demonstrated their faith in God's promises by being buried with Sarah.

This little piece of land gives promise of the whole land and makes clear that Abraham and Sarah were aliens and strangers seeking a homeland, which they will receive at the resurrection of Old Testament believers. With this purchase of land in Hebron facing Mamre, Abraham wanted his descendants to know that he had believed in the Lord's promises.

The presence of the grave site among his descendants in later years would be mute but eloquent testimony to them all that Abraham was sure that God would fulfill His promises.

Genesis 25:11, "It came about after the death of Abraham that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac lived by Beer-lahai-roi."

"**Beer**" refers to a well dug close to the spring (Hebrew *ayin*, "**spring**") for convenience and "**Lahai-roi**" means, "belonging to the living one, my seeing one."

"**Beer-lahai-roi**" was the fountain by which the Lord rescued Hagar as recorded in Genesis 16:7, 14 and was located between Kadesh and Bered, about fifty miles southwest of Beersheba.

The mention of "**Beer-lahai-roi**" forms a transition to the account of the descendants of Ishmael, which is recorded in the seventh book of Genesis, in Genesis 25:12-18 and suggests that Isaac will displace him.

The statement "**God blessed Isaac**" anticipates the next major section in the book of Genesis, namely, the eighth book of Genesis, which gives us the record of the account of the line of Isaac that appears in Genesis 25:19-35:29 and ends the story of Abraham.

The statement "**God blessed Isaac**" demonstrates that God as He did with Abraham was making His covenant with Isaac and thus fulfills the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:19 and 21.

"**Bless**" is the verb *barakh* (Er[^]B*), which means, "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc." Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that Isaac was endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity."

Like Abraham, the Lord blessed Isaac in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually. Also, like Abraham, the Lord blessed Isaac in the sense that the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially. Like Abraham, the Lord blessed anyone who was associated with Isaac.

The "piel" stem of the verb *barakh* is "real factitive" meaning that Isaac would experience the blessings that the Lord would bring upon him.

At this particular time in the narrative, Isaac was the only surviving link in the Messianic line. He was Abraham's heir and just as God blessed Abraham so He would now begin to prosper Isaac materially, financially and spiritually. Although Abraham was gone, God's program would continue. No leader of the covenant is indispensable for God's program to bless the world will continue to grow and expand from generation to generation.

Each of God's servants must do all that he can to ensure the perpetuation of God's work. No individual leader is bigger than God's plan for the work is bigger than any individual. Therefore, with the death of Abraham the torch has been

passed to Isaac to carry on the work of God on planet earth.

Genesis 25:12-18 constitutes the seventh book in Genesis and presents to us the genealogy of Ishmael's descendants. The seventh book contained in Genesis 25:12-18 consists of three parts: (1) Ishmael's segmented genealogy presenting the twelve tribes (25:13-16) (2) Ishmael's obituary notice (25:17) (3) Settlements and destiny of Ishmael's tribes (25:18).

The genealogy contained in Genesis 25:12-18 is a "segmented" genealogy displaying the relations between twelve kinship groups by tracing their lineage back to Ishmael. This broad segmented genealogy consists entirely of the twelve names of the first generation indicating a very powerful confederation of tribes, which is confirmed by the statement in Genesis 25:16 **"and these are the names of the twelve tribal rulers."**

The twelve tribes descending from Ishmael correspond in number to the twelve tribes of Nahor (see Genesis 22:20-24), of Edom (see Genesis 36:10-14) and of Israel (See Genesis 35:23-26).

Book seven repeats a segmented genealogy like that of Abraham's sons by Keturah (25:1-4, 13-16), ending with a notice of their settlement and their relationship with their brothers (25:5-6, 18) and also an obituary notice like that of Abraham (25:7-8, 17).

Each of these scenes ends with a statement about the relationship of the sons. Abraham sends the sons of Keturah away from Isaac, Isaac and Ishmael bury Abraham together and the sons of Ishmael live in opposition with all their brothers.

Moses devotes an entire book to the genealogy of a concubine, which was unusual since this genealogy demonstrates that the Lord fulfilled His promises to Abraham (and to Hagar concerning Ishmael (See Genesis 16:10, 12; 17:20) and to Abraham that he would be **"the father of a multitude of nations"** (See Genesis 17:4).

Genesis 25:12-15, "Now these are the records of the generations of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham; and these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, in the order of

their birth: Nebaioth, the firstborn of Ishmael, and Kedar and Adbeel and Mibsam and Mishma and Dumah and Massa, Hadad and Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah."

"These are the records of the generations of Ishmael" refers to the record of the descendants of Ishmael, which follows in Genesis 25:12-18 as indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T), **"the records of the generations"** which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

The statement **"Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maid, bore to Abraham"** recalls the incidents recorded in Genesis 16 and Genesis 21:9-21.

The names of the twelve princes descending from Ishmael are applied not only to tribal divisions but also to geographical localities. These twelve sons of Ishmael and were grandsons of Abraham formed Arab nation in fulfillment of the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 21:13 and populated the Arabian Peninsula.

The first son of Ishmael was **"Nebaioth"** (ty)b*n+) (Hebrew: *n^evayoth* pronounced neb-aw-yoth) whose name means, "heights" and whose descendants were the "Nabayati" an Arab tribe that was conquered by Ashurbanipal in the seventh century (668-633 B.C.) and are mentioned in Isaiah 60:7.

The second son of Ishmael was **"Kedar"** (rd*q@) (Hebrew: *qedhar* pronounced kay-dawr) whose name means, "dark skin" and whose descendants were nomadic tribe of the Syrian-Arabian desert (Ps. 120:5; Song. 1:5; Jer. 49:28f), specifically, in the region between Egypt and Dedan-Edom.

Despite their nomadic habits, they seem to have had some stability because they are said to have dwelled in villages (Isa. 42:11) and helped supply Tyre with lambs, rams and goats (Ezek. 27:21). Not only were they owners of flocks (Isa. 60:7) but also they were great archers and mighty warriors (Isa. 21:16f.) before the Lord diminished them.

The third son of Ishmael was **"Adbeel"** (la@B+d+a) (Hebrew: *`adhb^eel* pronounced ad-beh-ale) whose name means, "chastened of God"

and whose descendants subjugated by Tiglath Pileser III and as a result lived on the border of Egypt and thus were located in northwest Arabia.

The fourth son of Ishmael was “**Mibsam**” (SC*b+m!) (Hebrew: *mivsam*) whose name means, “sweet smell” and whose descendants were later absorbed into the Israelite tribe of Simeon since he and his brother “Mishma” appear in the genealogy of Simeon, which is recorded in 1 Chronicles 4:24f.

The fifth son of Ishmael was “**Mishma**” (um*v+m!) (Hebrew: *mishma*) whose name means, “a hearing” and whose descendants like “**Mibsam**” were later absorbed into the Israelite tribe of Simeon when they extended southward (1 Chronicles 4:38-43) since the two brothers appear together in the genealogy of Simeon, which is recorded in 1 Chronicles 4:24f.

The sixth son of Ishmael was “**Dumah**” (hm*WD) (Hebrew: *dumah*) whose name means, “silence” and whose descendants are referred to in Isaiah 21:11 making it a part of Edom. The place where Dumah’s descendants settled is described in the inscriptions of Esarhaddon (680-669 B.C.) as “Adumati the stronghold of the Arabs.” The later Arabs called the place “Dumah of the stones” and its modern name is “el-Jof,” which means, “the cavity” and lies in the northern sector of the Arabian Desert due east of the Gulf of Akaba.

The seventh son of Ishmael was “**Massa**” (ac*m^) (Hebrew: *massa* pronounced mas-saw) whose name means, “burden” and whose descendants settled in Tayma and who were subjugated by Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727 B.C.) who extracted gold, silver, male and female camels all kinds of spices from them.

The eighth son of Ishmael was “**Hadad**” (dd^j&) (Hebrew: *chadhadh*) whose name means, “honor” and the location of where his descendants settled is as of yet, unidentified.

The ninth son of Ishmael was “**Tema**” (am*yT@) (Hebrew: *tema* pronounced tay-maw) whose name means, “desert” and whose descendants settled in an area now known as “Teyma,” which was situated in northern Arabia, about 180 miles from the Dead Sea, adjacent to the Syrian desert.

Three trade routes once converged at the town Teyma connecting it to southern Arabia, Syria and the Mediterranean, with branches accessing Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf. Like the descendants of his brothers, Adbeel and Massa, the descendants of Tema were subjugated by Tiglath Pileser III.

The tenth son of Ishmael was “**Jetur**” (rWfy+) (Hebrew: *y^etur* pronounced yet-oor) whose name means, “enclosed” and whose descendants were called the “Ituraeans” who fought against the Israelite tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh according to 1 Chronicles 5:19.

The “Ituraeans” at one time lived in the Trans-jordan area but moved northeast of Galilee to the Biqa Valley of Lebanon when they were defeated by the Israelites. They were infamous in the Middle East since they were known for involved in robbery, extortion and had a reputation as barbarians and were also skilled archers taking after their father Ishmael.

In New Testament era, they lived in a region controlled by the Romans and were assigned successively to Herod the Great, his son Philip and Herod Agrippa I according to Luke 3:1.

The eleventh son of Ishmael was “**Naphish**” (vyp!n*) (Hebrew: Naphish pronounced naw-feesh) whose name means, “refreshment” and whose descendants like “**Jetur**” were defeated by the Israelite tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh according to 1 Chronicles 5:19 and therefore, were displaced from the Trans-jordan area, and moved northeast of Galilee to the Biqa Valley of Lebanon.

According to 1 Chronicles 5:21, this victory by the Israelite tribes over Naphish and Jetur gained them a tremendous spoil including 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2,000 donkeys and 100,000 captives and the territory of the descendants of Naphish and Jetur.

The twelfth and final son of Ishmael was “**Kedemah**” (hm*d+q@) (Hebrew: *qedh^emah* pronounced kady-maw) whose name means, “eastward” and is unattested.

Genesis 25:16, “These are the sons of Ishmael and these are their names, by their villages, and

by their camps; twelve princes according to their tribes.”

Genesis 25:16 indicates that the names of Ishmael’s 12 sons designate eponymous (An historical person whose name is the source of the name of a city) ancestors who have given their names to both their tribes and places of settlement.

“**Villages**” is the noun *chatser* (rx@j*) (khaw-tsare), which refers to a settlement without walls and therefore without protection and yet contained enclosures for animals, thus pointing to the settlement of pastoral nomads.

“**Encampments**” is the noun *tirah* (hr*yf@) (tee-raw), which refers to simply to a “habitation” and therefore the “tents” of the Ishmaelites.

The fact that twelve princes originated from Ishmael is a fulfillment of the Lord’s prophecy to Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 17:20.

Genesis 17:20, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

Genesis 25:17, “**These are the years of the life of Ishmael, one hundred and thirty-seven years; and he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people.**”

Abraham outlived his son Ishmael by thirty-eight years since Abraham died at one hundred seventy-five years of age according to Genesis 25:7 and Isaac outlived Ishmael by forty-three years since Isaac died at one hundred eighty years of age according to Genesis 35:28.

“**Breathed his last**” is the verb *gawa* (UW^G*) (gaw-vaw), which pictures the act of drawing one’s last breath.

“**Died**” is the verb *muth* (tWm) (mooth), which denotes the general act of dying.

Like Abraham, Ishmael is said to be “**gathered to his people.**”

The question arises therefore as to whether or not Ishmael was saved and when it says “**his people**” is the writer referring to the unsaved in Torments

or the saved who were residing in Paradise prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ?

The expression **gathered to his people**” is always used with reference to believers (Abraham in Genesis 25:8; Isaac in Genesis 35:29; Jacob in Genesis 49:33; Aaron in Numbers 20:24, 26; Deuteronomy 35:20).

Further indicating that he was saved is that it would seem highly likely that Abraham spent a good deal of time speaking of the Lord to Ishmael and that Ishmael would have accepted the Lord as his Savior. Ishmael lived under Abraham’s authority until he was seventeen and then he was expelled.

Also, according to Genesis 17:25, Ishmael entered into the Abrahamic covenant by being circumcised at thirteen years of age indicating that he had accepted the Lord as his Savior.

Furthermore, as we saw in Genesis 16, Hagar, Ishmael’s mother was saved and undoubtedly told Ishmael of the Lord who delivered her in the wilderness of Shur. Although, the Lord in Genesis 16:12 prophesied that Ishmael would be a “**wild donkey of man**” does “not” imply that he was not saved but only serves as a description of his character and that of his descendants.

Also, Paul teaches in Galatians 4:29 that Ishmael was born of the flesh and Isaac of the Spirit but this does not indicate that Ishmael was saved and Isaac was not. But rather it refers to the fact that Isaac was born miraculously by the power of the Spirit like all believers through regeneration and that Ishmael was not born miraculously like Isaac.

The fact that the Lord informs Abraham that He will make His covenant with Isaac does “not” mean that Ishmael was not saved and Isaac was not but rather it means that Isaac would be in the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ and Ishmael would not. Therefore, when Genesis 25:18 states that Ishmael was “**gathered to his people**” it means that like his father Abraham, he went to a compartment of Hades or Sheol called, “Paradise” that was the abode of the saved prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ.

“Paradise” was the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to

heaven after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:10).

Ephesians 4:8, “Therefore it says, ‘WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.’”

Genesis 25:18, “They settled from Havilah to Shur which is east of Egypt as one goes toward Assyria; he settled in defiance of all his relatives.”

“**They**” refers to the twelve sons of Ishmael and their families. “**Havilah**” was located in the region East of Egypt in northwest Arabia (see 1 Samuel 15:7). The name “**Shur**” means “wall” and was a city on the borders of Egypt and Palestine and a comparison of Genesis 20:1, 25:18, 1 Samuel 15:7 and 27:8 indicates that it clearly lies near the northern border of Egypt in the Sinai peninsula in the modern Suez region.

There are two different Hebrew verbs employed in Genesis 25:18 and yet the New American Standard translates both verbs “**settled**.”

In Genesis 25:18, the verb *shakhan* (/k[^]v*) is translated “**they settled**” and is used with reference to Ishmael’s twelve sons and means, “to dwell, occupy a place.” Also, in Genesis 25:18, the verb *niphal* (lp[^]n*) is translated “**he settled**” and is used with reference to Ishmael himself but it does “not” mean, “to settle.”

The verb *niphal* has a wide range of meanings in the Old Testament, from a simply physical fall to the violence of death in battle, each stemming from the meaning “to fall.”

In Genesis 25:18, the verb *niphal* means that Ishmael, “died” in opposition to all his relatives, which parallels the statement concerning him in Genesis 16:12 that he “lived” in opposition to all his relatives.

The statement “**he (Ishmael) settled in defiance of all his relatives**” is a fulfillment of the Lord’s prophecy to his mother Hagar in Genesis 16:12.

Genesis 16:12, “He will be a wild donkey of a man, his hand will be against everyone, and everyone’s hand will be against him; And he will live to the east of all his brothers.”

The Lord prophesied that Ishmael would wander the deserts like a wild donkey and would be a man who loved the freedom of roaming the desert, but would be constantly in conflict with others. It is implied that he would also be a man of courage but would be an aggressor full of hostility.

The expression “**to the east**” is incorrectly translated since it is composed of the preposition ‘*al* (lu[^]), which means, “against” and the preposition *panim* (syn!P*) (paw-neem), which means, “in the face of” and therefore, should be translated “he will live in opposition to all his brothers.”

This prophecy indicates that Ishmael and his descendants, who are the Arabs would live in opposition to their blood relatives and in particular the Jews who are related to the Arabs since they share the same father, Abraham.

Genesis 25:19-20 records the family history of Isaac and as a part of this history Genesis 25:21 records Rebekah’s problem with getting pregnant. In this passage we see that Isaac, in response to this problem, prays to the Lord to resolve Rebekah’s problem of infertility. The Lord fulfills Isaac’s prayer request twenty years later since Genesis 25:21 records Isaac as being forty when he married Rebekah and Genesis 25:26 records Isaac as being sixty when Rebekah had twins.

The fact that Isaac prayed for twenty years for his wife to get pregnant emphasizes that like his father Abraham, Isaac was a man of great faith and a powerful intercessor. This great faith that Isaac displayed in his intercessory prayer for his wife Rebekah will be the focus of our study this morning. This passage also emphasizes the power of intercessory prayer.

Genesis 25:19 begins a new section in Genesis, which ends in Genesis 35:29 and constitutes the eighth book in Genesis presenting to us the family history of Isaac and in particular Jacob whose name was later changed by the Lord to “Israel.” The emphasis in this section is upon Jacob since he would carry on the line of Christ.

Up to this point in our study of Genesis, we have seen that the human nature of Jesus Christ would come from the line of Seth (Luke 3:38) and Shem

(Gen. 9:24-27; Luke 3:36), Abraham (Gen. 12:3) and Isaac (Gen. 17:19).

At the forefront of Jacob's story is his struggle with his twin brother, Esau, which was a fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy to Rebekah in Genesis 25:22-23.

The names that the Lord gives to the twins pokes fun at them both since the name "**Esau**" means, "hairy," implying an animalistic nature and the name "**Jacob**" means, "heel," implying grasping.

Jacob has his name changed by the Lord to "**Israel**" after his return to the land of Canaan from Paddan Aram and his struggle with the preincarnate Christ.

The name "**Israel**" means "the one who struggles with God and humans and who prevails."

Genesis 25:19-20, "Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife."

"**These are the records of the generations of Isaac**" refers to the family history of Isaac, which follows in Genesis 25:19-35:29 as indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T), "**the records of the generations**" which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

In Genesis 25:19, the noun *toledhoth* introduces the eighth section of the book of Genesis, which is completed in Genesis 35:29 and centers upon Jacob who like his father Isaac and his grandfather Abraham are ancestors of the human nature of Jesus Christ.

The statement "**Abraham became the father of Isaac**" emphasizes Isaac's role as the successor of Abraham in fulfillment of the promise made by the Lord to Abraham recorded in Genesis 21:12.

Unlike Sarah, Rebekah's age is omitted since she is not beyond the age of childbearing.

"**Paddan Aram**" (/D^P^m! sR*a&) is another name for "Aram Naharaim," which means, "Aram of the Two Rivers." Therefore, the word is synonymous with the name "**Mesopotamia**,"

which appears in Genesis 24:10 since the word "**Mesopotamia**" is composed of the pronoun noun *Aram* (sr*a&), "Aram" and the plural form of the noun *nahar* (rh*n*), "two rivers."

These two rivers were in the western part of Mesopotamia and the two rivers were the Balikh and the Khabur, tributaries of the Euphrates River. The city of Haran was on the Balikh River about a seven hundred mile journey north-northeast of Beersheba and nearby was the city of Nahor, which was founded by Abraham's brother, Nahor.

The name "**Paddan**" means "field, plain" therefore, the expression "**Paddan Aram**" means, "plain of Aram." The name "**Aram**" (sr*a() (Hebrew: *aram* pronounced arawm) means, "exalted" and is frequently translated "Syrian" or "Syria" and is used to speak specifically of the Aramean people who were a leading branch of Semitic people living in Mesopotamia and northern Syria (2 Sam. 8:5-6; 1 Kgs. 20:20-21).

Isaac and Jacob both took Aramean wives (Gen. 25:20; 28:5) and in fact, Jacob is called the "**wandering Aramean**" in Deuteronomy 26:5. Therefore, "**Paddan Aram**" refers to the city of Nahor where Abraham's brother founded a city and named it after himself and was the place that Abraham's servant found Rebekah, Isaac's wife.

Genesis 25:21, "Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived."

"**Prayed**" is the qal imperfect form of the verb *athar* (rt^u*) (aw-thar), which means, "to intercede in prayer."

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), which is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the "immanency" of God where the Lord intervened in the life of Isaac and Rebekah provided them children in order to fulfill His covenant promises to Abraham and Isaac.

The proper noun *Yahweh*, "**Lord**" is used here to emphasize that by answering Isaac's prayer He would be fulfilling His promises to Abraham of numerous progeny and that Isaac would be in the line of the Promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

Prayer is an expression of the believer's worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

The confession of sin to the Father is essential for our prayers to be heard since the Father will not hear our prayers if we are harboring any known sin in our stream of consciousness.

Psalm 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

All prayer in the church age must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Eph. 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Luke 11:2, "And He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.'"

In Genesis 25:21, the term "**Lord**" refers to God the Father since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

The believer is to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because it is through the merits of His impeccable Person and Finished Work on the Cross and Advocacy with the Father as well as the believer's union with Christ that gives the believer the privilege to boldly approach the throne of God in prayer.

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Praying in our Lord's name means that we are to pray to the Father consciously aware of our exalted position where we are seated at the Father's right hand because of our eternal union and identification with Christ.

Ephesians 2:6, "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Jude 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying by means of the power of the Holy Spirit."

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Isaac's prayer was successful because it was according to the will of God.

Answered prayer demands faith on the part of the believer (Mt. 17:20; Jam. 5:15).

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God and confident obedience to God's Word regardless of the circumstances or consequences.

Isaac's prayer for Rebekah was successful because he offered it in faith.

During these twenty years, Isaac and Rebekah's faith was tested since a faith that is incapable of enduring trials and tribulations is no faith at all.

Jeremiah 20:12, "Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart."

This was also a test of Abraham's faith because he lived another thirty-five years after Isaac was married. The Lord tested Isaac and Rebekah's faith in order to produce endurance in them.

James 1:2-4, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

The Lord rewarded Isaac's faith, which teaches us that the Lord rewards the believer after his faith has been tested.

James 1:12, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

Therefore, the fulfillment of Isaac's prayer request of twenty years teaches us that we must wait patiently upon God.

Hebrews 6:13-15

"For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself."

"saying, 'I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.'"

"And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."

The fulfillment of Isaac's twenty year intercessory prayer request for his wife Rebekah teaches us that perseverance is essential in order to receive the fulfillment of God's promises. Perseverance is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances.

Matthew 7:7, "Ask repeatedly, and it will be given to you; seek repeatedly, and you will find; knock repeatedly, and it will be opened to you."

Isaac and Rebekah had to continue to bear up under the difficult circumstance of being childless in order to finally receive the promise of a child.

Romans 5:3, "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance."

Unlike Abraham and Sarah, the Scriptures do not record Isaac and Rebekah trying to help the Lord out in solving their problem of being childless by using a surrogate, which Abraham and Sarah did as recorded in Genesis 16. Evidently, Abraham and Sarah taught Isaac to wait on the Lord since, of all the patriarchs Isaac was the only one who was monogamous and did not take a concubine.

The faith of Isaac in praying for Rebekah and the Lord's answer to his prayer demonstrates the

spiritual principle that you appropriate the omnipotence of God by operating in faith.

Matthew 17:20, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

The fact that Rebekah was barren gave the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate His power to fulfill His promise to Abraham in giving him numerous progeny over seemingly insurmountable odds (See Genesis 15:5; 22:17).

Jeremiah 32:27, "Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?"

Isaac and Rebekah had to learn the lessons of faith and to understand that theirs is not a "natural" but a "supernatural" seed (see Genesis 11:30; 17:15-16; 18:1-15; 21:1-7).

The fact that Isaac's intercessory prayer for his wife Rebekah solved her problem of infertility teaches that prayer solves problems (Kgs. 17:1; cf. 18:36-46; Acts 12:1-17; Phlp. 4:6).

Genesis 25:22-23 records Rebekah's problems involved with her pregnancy and her inquiring of the Lord as to the meaning of it. In this passage, the Lord responds to her inquiry by prophesying of the family history of the two children who were named, "Esau" and "Jacob."

Genesis 25:22, "**But the children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is so, why then am I this way?' So she went to inquire of the LORD.**"

By indicating that there is to be more than one child, the narrator, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit takes the reader into his confidence. Of course, Rebekah at the time did not know that she was carrying twins and that they were struggling with each other in her womb.

"**Struggle**" is the verb *ratsats* (JX^r*) (raw-tsats), which is in the rare hithpoel stem meaning "to crush each other."

The verb *ratsats* implies an extraordinary violent struggle taking place in the womb of Rebekah, which she understood to be far greater than normal, and thus of great significance. This

struggle among the fetuses in Rebekah's womb foreshadowed the relationship of the children and their descendants later on in history. So Rebekah is experiencing an unusually difficult pregnancy and fears of miscarrying. Rebekah thought she was simply carrying the next generation but little did she know that she was carrying twins.

The rivalry of Jacob and Esau begins in the womb of Rebekah and would progress from her womb to the troubled delivery of the twins (25:26), and to their differences in profession (25:27) as well as to the opposing preferences of the parents (25:28). This struggle in the womb of Rebekah would also foreshadow Jacob's struggle with the preincarnate Christ (32:22-32).

The struggle of the twins, Esau and Jacob foreshadows the struggles between Jacob and Esau in the following events: (1) Jacob secures the birthright (Genesis 25:27-34). (2) Jacob steals Esau's blessing (Genesis 27:1-40). (3) Jacob prevails with Esau and secures his good will (Genesis 32:1-33:16).

The rivalry between Jacob and Esau spilled over into conflicts between their parents, Isaac and Rebekah (Genesis 27:1-46) and it also effected Jacob and his wives as well as his wives with each other (Genesis 30:1-24) and Jacob and Laban (Genesis 29:14b-31:55).

So because of the violent and unusual way that the fetuses were struggling within her, Rebekah inquires of the Lord in prayer as to the meaning of it all.

The fact that Rebekah is recorded as having "**went to inquire of the Lord**" indicates that she sought out the Lord in prayer in order to ascertain the meaning of this struggle taking place in her womb. Of course, Rebekah was unaware that she was carrying twins.

The question Rebekah asks is "elliptical" meaning that words such as copulas ("is") are left out because of Rebekah's anxiety and urgent desire to find relief from this problem pregnancy and to understand the significance of it.

"**I**" is the conditional particle *`im* (sa!) (eem), which introduces the protasis of a 1st class condition, which indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument.

A conditional sentence has an "if" part and a "then" part. The "if" introduces the "protasis" and "then" introduces the "apodasis." Often, the "protasis" often introduces the "cause" and the "apodasis" the "effect."

In Genesis 25:22, the particle *`im*, "**if**" is introducing a protasis, which presents the "cause" of Rebekah's pregnancy, which is of course, the sovereign will of God.

Now, remember the question of Rebekah's is "elliptical" and so therefore, we can translate or paraphrase the interrogative particle as "if, it is Your will." Rebekah recognizes that children are a gift from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3, "Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward."

The adverb *ken* (/K@) (kane), "**so**" introduces the apodasis, which presents the "effect" of her getting pregnant by the sovereign will of God.

"**Why**" is the interrogative particle *lammah* (hM*I*), which is a compound word composed of the preposition *l* (l+), "to me" and the adverb *mah* (hm*), "why" therefore, the word literally means, "why...to me."

The preposition *l* is called a "lamed of disadvantage" meaning that Rebekah considers this unusual and difficult pregnancy to be to her disadvantage or uncomfortable.

Therefore, she is saying in effect, "Why am I having this happen to me, which is very uncomfortable."

The demonstrative pronoun *zeh* (hz#), "**this**" is pointing to Rebekah's unusual and difficult pregnancy.

The interrogative particle *lammah* becomes emphatic when it is used with the demonstrative pronoun *zeh* (hz#), "**this**."

The demonstrative pronoun *zeh*, "**this**" when attached to the interrogative pronoun *lammah* strengthens the meaning of the interrogative, adding directness and force and emphasizing the close personal involvement of the speaker.

"**T**" is the pronoun *`anokhi* (yk!n)a*) (aw-no-kee), which refers to Rebekah of course.

Again, the question is “elliptical” so we could translate this expression, “why am I having this happen to me, which is very uncomfortable?”

Therefore, Rebekah is saying in effect to the Lord in prayer, “If this is Your will that I get pregnant, then why am I having this struggle take place in my womb, which is very uncomfortable?”

Rebekah asks this question because she fears that she might be miscarrying and doesn’t understand why the Lord would permit her to get pregnant but then lose the children through a miscarriage. The Lord’s response to Rebekah’s question appears in Genesis 25:23.

Genesis 25:23, “The LORD said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.’”

The Lord’s statement to Rebekah that “**two nations are in your womb**” implies that she is pregnant with twins and refers to the fact that these twins are twin progenitors of two nations.

The oldest son “**Esau**” would be the progenitor of the Edomites (See Genesis 36:1-43) whereas the younger son “**Jacob**” would be the progenitor of the Israelites.

Jacob would father twelve sons who were heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (1 Chronicles 1:34; 2:1-2; Acts 7:8) and through the nation of Israel would come the Savior of the world (John 4:22; Romans 9:3-5).

To the nation of Israel would be given the Old Testament Scriptures, the adoption as sons, the Mosaic Law, the Shekinah Glory, the promises and the unconditional covenants (Davidic, Palestinian, New and Abrahamic) (see Romans 9:1-5).

The Edomites and the Israelites fought continuously.

From Rebekah’s womb, Jacob and Esau would be at odds with each other.

The Lord’s prediction that “**two peoples will be separated from your (Rebekah’s) body**” indicates that Jacob and Esau would be separated,

divided and hostile towards one another and would have nothing in common.

The Lord’s prediction that “**one people shall be stronger than the other**” refers to the fact that the Israelites would prevail over the Edomites in history. Also this prophecy indicates that Jacob and not Esau would be in the Messianic line and would inherit the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. Normally, the oldest would receive the father’s inheritance and estate but the Lord does not always subscribe to this.

In Genesis 25:23, the Lord declares that the “**older shall serve the younger**” indicating that the younger son, Jacob would receive the inheritance and not Esau who was older. Esau, the older, did not actually serve Jacob, his younger twin but rather Esau’s descendants did (see 1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 22:47; 2 Kings 14:7).

This prophecy that “**one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger**” indicates that the sovereign will of God has ordained the following: (1) Jacob to be in the Messianic line and not Esau. (2) Jacob would be the beneficiary of the divine promises enumerated in the Abrahamic Covenant and not Esau. (3) Jacob would receive his father’s estate and not Esau.

Just as the Lord had chosen Isaac who was younger over Ishmael to receive Abraham’s inheritance so the Lord had chosen Jacob who was younger than Esau. In the Messianic line, Seth, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and David were not first-born sons. Therefore, we see the Lord is expressing His sovereign will for Rebekah’s twin sons, Esau and Jacob and that He has ordained from eternity past, that Jacob would be in the line of Christ and not Esau.

Jacob did “not” merit this privilege, nor did Esau do anything to “not” merit it but rather, it was all based upon God’s grace and mercy and sovereign will. The prophet Malachi cites evidence of this conflict between Esau and Jacob in Israel’s experience.

Malachi 1:2-3, “I have loved you, says the LORD. But you say, ‘How have You loved us?’ ‘Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?’ declares the

LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.'"

The terms "**love**" and "**hate**" are "anthropopathisms," meaning that the writer is ascribing the human emotion of personal love and hate to God, which He does "not" possess in order to explain God's choice of entering into a covenant relationship with Jacob rather than Esau and does "not" indicate one is saved and the other is not.

The verbs in the Hebrew translated "**I have loved**" and "**I have hated**" are in the perfect tense and therefore, express not only God's past relationship with Israel and Edom but also His historical and present dealings (in Malachi's day) with these peoples.

Both Israel and Edom received judgment from God at the hands of the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C. (Jer. 27:2-8). However, God promised to restore Israel over and over again because of His covenant promises (Deut. 4:29-31; 30:1-10) but He condemned Edom to complete destruction, never to be restored (Jer. 49:7-22; Ezek. 35).

In Romans 9:13, Paul quotes Malachi 1:3 to demonstrate that God elected Jacob's descendants, the nation of Israel as His covenant people and He rejected the Edomites as His covenant people who were descendants of Esau.

Romans 9:10-13

"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac."

"for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.'"

"Just as it is written, 'JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.'"

In Romans 9-11, the apostle Paul discusses the future of the nation of Israel and teaches that God

has temporarily set aside the nation at this time in history and will restore her in the future because she was elected by Him to be His covenant people. Therefore, when we see the statement "**Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated**" we must understand that Paul is not referring to individuals but rather to the nations which descended from Jacob (Israelites) and Esau (Edomites).

Therefore, the statement "**Jacob I loved but Esau I hated**" does "not" refer to the fact that Esau was not saved and Jacob was since that would imply that God hates sinners and elects some people to be saved and others to eternal condemnation, which contradicts the teaching of Scripture that God's will is for all men to be saved (See 1 Timothy 2:4, 4:10, 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:16-18, 1 John 2:2).

John 3:16, 17

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

1 Timothy 2:4, "(God) desires all men to be saved."

1 Timothy 4:10, "For it is for this we labor and strive, because we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers."

The statement "**Jacob I loved but Esau I hated**" is "not" a reference to Jacob and Esau as individuals but rather it is a reference to the nations, which descended from them, namely, the Israelites from Jacob and the Edomites from Esau. Therefore, the statement refers to the "national" election of Israel as God's covenant people who are descendants of Jacob and the rejection of the Edomites as His covenant people who were descendants of Esau.

The rejection of Esau's descendants as His covenant people does "not" mean that God elected the Edomites and the Gentiles to eternal condemnation and the Israelites to salvation since that would contradict the biblical doctrine of the

unlimited atonement, which states that God desires all men to be saved.

The election of the nation of Israel, like the choice of Jacob over Esau was “non-meritorious” meaning that there was nothing that the nation of Israel and Jacob did that secured God choosing them since many times both sinned and failed to obey God.

Genesis 25:24-26 records Rebekah giving birth to twins, Esau and Jacob.

Genesis 25:24, “When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.”

Genesis 25:25, “Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau.”

The parents give the names to twins and not the Lord. But the Lord does predict their tumultuous relationship with each other and between their future descendants. The name given to the twins pokes fun at them.

“**Red**” is the adjective *`adhmoni* (yn!w)med+a^ (ad-mo-nee), which describes the older twin anticipating his rugged nature.

The name given to “**Esau**” (WC*u@) means, “hairy,” implying an animalistic nature and describes the oldest twin as “the hairy monster.”

“**Esau**” became the father of the Edomite people according to Genesis 36:1-43 who later became the arch rivals of the Israelites.

The name “**Seir**,” demarcating the Edomite territory means, “hairy” and may have been implemented in remembrance of Esau.

Genesis 25:26, “Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them.”

The name given to “**Jacob**” means, “heel,” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^} implying grasping and describes the younger twin as “the heel catcher.”

The actions of Jacob at his birth in grasping the heel of his brother Esau was the first manifestation of the volatile relationship that the Lord predicted

would take place between the two children later and their descendants.

The manner in which the twins were born was a visible omen underlying the Lord’s prophecy. The actions of Jacob at birth towards his brother where he is described as desperately trying to catch up to his older brother and their struggle with each other in their mother’s womb sets the pattern for their relationship in life and the relationship between their descendants.

Esau and Jacob contrasted in many ways. First of all, each one’s physical appearance was different for Esau as we noted was a hairy man but Jacob had smooth skin according to Genesis 25:25 and 27:11.

Secondly, Esau became a skillful hunter and an outdoorsman but Jacob “**was a quiet man, staying among the tents**” as a shepherd (Genesis 25:27). Thirdly, Esau became the favorite son of Isaac but Jacob was loved by Rebekah (Genesis 25:28).

The fact that Jacob stayed among the tents and was the favorite of Rebekah implies that he was a “momma’s boy” and a “homebody.”

Esau was an unbeliever according to Hebrews 12:16 whereas Jacob was a believer. Esau agreed to trade his birthright to Jacob in exchange for a bowl of lentil stew according to Genesis 25:29-34.

Jacob and Rebekah successfully conspired to trick Isaac into giving his blessing and inheritance to Jacob while Esau was away hunting for his father’s favorite meal of wild game (Genesis 27:1-40). In order to escape the wrath of Esau, who wanted to kill him for the deception, Jacob fled to his uncle Laban (Genesis 27:41-28:5).

Years later, Esau and Jacob reconciled (Genesis 32:1-22; 33:1-16) but lived in different regions. Esau settled his family in the land of Seir in the country of Edom (Genesis 32:3; 33:16; 36) while Jacob lived in the hill country of central Palestine.

The mention of Isaac’s age at the birth of his twin sons is done since the birth of one’s first child was regarded as a most important milestone in a man’s life (cf. 5:3, 6; 11:12, 14, etc.).

The mention of Isaac’s age at the birth of his twin sons emphasizes that Isaac was a man of faith and who persevered in his prayers since Genesis 25:21

records Isaac as being forty when he married Rebekah and started praying for a child and Genesis 25:26 records Isaac as being sixty when Rebekah had twins.

The fact that it took twenty years for Isaac's prayer request to be fulfilled implies that Rebekah and Isaac's joy outweighed all the problems with Rebekah's pregnancy and ominous delivery. Esau and Jacob were an answer to persistent prayer and the fruit of a difficult pregnancy and the joy over the twins safe arrival must have been great.

The fact that Isaac prayed for twenty years for his wife to get pregnant emphasizes that like his father Abraham, Isaac was a man of great faith and a powerful intercessor.

In Genesis 25:27-28, we have the record of the conflict between Isaac and Rebekah over Esau and Jacob.

Genesis 25:27, "When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."

As the twins grew, the difference in their characters, which God in His omniscience already knew of, began to be apparent through their respective interests and activities.

"**Skillful**" is the *yadha* (ud[^]y*), which is in the qal active participle form of the verb meaning, "one who is knowledgeable and therefore, skilled in a particular endeavor."

"**Hunter**" is the noun *tsayidh* (dy!x[^]) (tsah-yid), which refers to the act of hunting wild game.

Therefore, Genesis 25:27 describes Esau as being a man "who was skilled in hunting wild game."

Esau is also described as a "**man of the field**," which refers to the fact that he searched for game by roaming the territories situated outside cities and towns where wild animals roamed. Therefore, we see that the Bible describes Esau as the rugged outdoor type, which would endear him to his father Isaac who did not possess these qualities himself.

He was a skillful hunter and spent his time out in the fields searching for game in the open country. The fact that Esau was a skillful hunter really did "not" help his family at all since his family was

not endangered by wild beasts, nor did they, with their extensive flocks and herds, have any need to slaughter deer and other wild animals for food.

There was no over population of animals that needed thinning out for the sake of a balanced ecology since Esau had to become a "skillful" hunter to find them! In fact, hunting does not receive a favorable description in the Bible.

Even though the Law made provision for hunting and eating game, the biblical writers commend pastoralists and condemn predators. Deuteronomy 14:4-5 demonstrates that hunting was sometimes an economic necessity in Israel since the Lord permits Israel to eat certain wild animals.

Deuteronomy 14:4-5, "These are the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep."

Leviticus 17:13 presents legislation concerning the preparation for food of an animal caught in the hunt.

Leviticus 17:13, 14

"So when any man from the sons of Israel, or from the aliens who sojourn among them, in hunting catches a beast or a bird which may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with earth."

"For as for the life of all flesh, its blood is identified with its life. Therefore I said to the sons of Israel, 'You are not to eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood; whoever eats it shall be cut off.'"

The only hunter other than Esau mentioned in the Bible is Nimrod who is described in Genesis 10:9 as a "**mighty hunter against the Lord**" meaning that he was a rebel against the Lord who hunted for the souls of men whereas Esau was a sportsman unconcerned with God.

Esau preferred playing in the fields even long before he was a grown man, to working for his family and serving the Lord.

Hebrews 12:16 describes Esau also as a fornicator and a profane person and an unbeliever. Therefore, Esau was not qualified to inherit the

responsibilities attached to the Lord's covenant promises.

The biblical ideal for a leader is symbolized by that of a shepherd (Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; John 10:1-18; 1 Peter 5:3-4). True Israel, like his God, behaves like a shepherd and not as a hunter.

Nahum Sarna commenting on Esau as a hunter, writes, "Near Eastern art often portrays kings and nobles in pursuit of game, but no Israelite or Judean king or hero is ever mentioned as indulging in the sport. However, the fact that Leviticus 17:13 legislates concerning the preparation for food of an animal caught in the hunt and that Deuteronomy 14:5 includes wild animals among those permitted to be eaten proves that hunting was sometimes an economic necessity even in Israel. Nevertheless, it is highly significant that sacrifice in Israel was restricted to domesticated animals" (The JPS Torah Commentary, Genesis, page 181, The Jewish Publication Society).

In Genesis 27:39-40, Isaac's predicated that Esau would live by his weapons and be a wild, restless and undisciplined man, seeking sport and adventure.

Genesis 27:39-40, "Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, 'Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck.'"

Now, we turn to the description of Jacob that appears in Genesis 25:27.

Genesis 25:27, "When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."

"Peaceful" is the adjective *tam* (ST*) (tawm), which means that Jacob was a "quiet" or "peaceful" man in the sense that in contrast to his outgoing, adventurous brother, he was a self-contained, detached personality complete in himself who was sensible, diligent, dutiful and peaceful.

Usually the adjective *tam* refers to people like Job who were "upright, righteous, having a clear

conscience before God, virtuous" and therefore "spiritually mature" (See Job 1:1, 8; 2:3; 9:22; cf. Genesis 6:9; Psalm 37:37). However, this sense is inappropriate for Jacob at this point in his life since his conduct as recorded in Genesis 27 portrays him as someone who was not "upright, righteous," or "virtuous" and certainly not "spiritually mature."

In order to understand the meaning of *tam* when used to describe Jacob we must understand that the writer is presenting a contrast between Jacob with his twin brother, Esau. Esau was outgoing, athletic, adventurous, who was never home since he was outdoorsman who loved to hunt wild game. Therefore, the adjective *tam* is used to present a contrast with Esau and describes Jacob as being peaceful in the sense that was he was a self-contained, detached personality complete in himself who was sensible, diligent, and dutiful.

The word describes Jacob as being a "peaceful" individual who could be counted on to attend to the responsibilities of the family business because he was home and not away hunting like Esau. It describes Jacob as being a "cultured" or a "refined" individual, who was thoughtful.

The adjective *tam* describes Jacob as being a "homebody," which made him the total opposite of his twin brother Esau. Therefore, in Genesis 25:27, the adjective *tam* should be translated "homebody," which is someone whose pleasures and activities center around the home.

The English noun "homebody" is appropriate since it fits the sense of the adjective *tam* in Genesis 25:27, which is designed to express a contrast with Esau who was never around the home but out hunting wild game.

The fact that Jacob is described as "living in tents" contrasts him with his adventurous brother Esau indicating that Jacob was a herdsman or pastoralist like his father and grandfather.

Genesis 25:28, "Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob."

Isaac loved Esau because of his own taste for wild game. Therefore, Esau's nature and occupation were favored by Isaac because of the satisfaction of his palate. On the other hand, Jacob was loved

by Rebekah. This was probably due to the prophecy that she received from the Lord that Esau and his descendants would serve Jacob's descendants and that Jacob would be in the line of Christ.

The other reason why Rebekah favored Jacob over Esau was that Jacob was a homebody. He also appears to have been a "momma's boy" as demonstrated by he and Rebekah conspiring together against Esau. Therefore, we see that the Word of God describes Esau as an outdoor-type man who loved to do the things a father could take pride in.

He was a skillful hunter, and he knew how to handle himself in the outdoors. In our culture I believe Esau would have been a football star in high school and college and might have played in the pros. He was a real macho man, the kind of son a father would swell with pride to talk about among his friends.

Jacob was entirely different. While Esau seems to have been aggressive, daring, and flamboyant, Jacob appears to be just the opposite in that he was quiet, thoughtful and more interested in staying at home than in venturing out and taking part in great physical endeavors. This is not to say that Jacob had no ambition, on the contrary. It was that Jacob couldn't see the sense in roaming the wilderness just to bag some game.

In the solitude of his tent Jacob could mentally reason out how to get ahead without getting his hands dirty and without taking dangerous risks. Esau was the kind of son that Isaac could proudly take with him wherever he went.

Rebekah, on the other hand, favored Jacob. She probably thought Esau was crude and uncultured. Jacob was a much more refined person, gentle and kind, the type of son a mother would be proud of. Jacob spent more time at home than Esau did.

Each parent seems to have identified too much with a particular son, thus creating divisions which were devastating. This favoritism also brought about disharmony between Isaac and his wife.

Later Rebekah was to conspire with Jacob to deceive her husband (chapter 27). This parental favoritism causes a rift in the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac.

Isaac's love for Esau is based upon the natural senses whereas Rebekah's love for Jacob is based upon the Lord's choice of Jacob and that Jacob was a responsible individual who took care of the family business and matters around the home.

Now, remember, Isaac and Rebekah's marriage was made in heaven since the Lord's will was for Rebekah to marry Isaac. Yet, even though the marriage was made in heaven, it was still dysfunctional since Isaac, Rebekah, Esau and Jacob possess old Adamic sin natures.

The marriage and family of Rebekah and Isaac was dysfunctional as demonstrated by Isaac's love for Esau over Jacob because Esau's pursuits satisfied his palate's desire for wild game!

Although Isaac was a spiritual man he developed a taste for Esau's wild game, which blinded him to the point that he preferred Esau over Jacob.

Rebekah preferred Jacob not only because of the Lord's choice of Jacob but also what mother would not prefer a son that was always there when she needed him, a son who could be counted on to keep the business of tent dwellers going smoothly and prosperously.

Genesis 25:29-34 presents to us Esau selling his birthright to his twin brother Jacob.

Genesis 25:29-30, "When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, 'Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.' Therefore his name was called Edom."

Genesis 25:34 identifies that the food Jacob was boiling was "**lentils**," which in the Hebrew is *`adhashim* (syv!r*u&) (aw-dawsheem).

A "lentil" is a small annual legume of the pea family and its lens-shaped edible seed is rich in protein and is one of the most ancient of cultivated foods. The red pottage of lentils, which Esau sold his birthright for probably was made from the red Egyptian lentil.

"**Famished**" is the adjective *`ayeph* ([y@u*) (aw-yafe), which describes physical exhaustion brought on by hunger and great exertion. Therefore, the adjective *`ayeph* describes Esau as being physically exhausted as a result of being

hungry and greatly exerting himself in the wilderness hunting.

“**Let me have a swallow**” is the verb *la`at* (fu^l*) (law-at), which is in the hiphil imperative form meaning “give a gulp” and the 1st person common singular pronominal suffix meaning “me.”

“**Red stuff**” is the adjective *`adhom* (sd)a*) (aw-dome), which refers to the red lentil soup that Jacob was making.

Esau does not care to know the name of the food that he is requesting from Jacob indicating his coarseness meaning that he is unrefined and crude, lacking good manners.

So, Esau is saying, “Please let me have a gulp from that red stuff, this red stuff here,” which is expressive of his aggressive and inconsiderate nature. Esau’s request demonstrates his bad manners, selfishness and inconsideration for others since he makes this request not knowing whether or not Jacob was making the red lentil soup for himself, his parents or others in the household.

He never takes into consideration that maybe Jacob is making this soup for others since he only cares that his own need be fulfilled. Esau demonstrates that he doesn’t put others ahead of himself.

Philippians 2:3, 4

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

“do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

“**Edom**” is the proper noun *`edhom* (sw)da\$) (ed-ome), which literally means, “red,” and was the name given to Esau to mark the occasion in which he exchanged his birthright to Jacob for some red lentil soup.

Genesis 36 states that Esau became the founder of the Edomite tribes who later became the arch rivals of the Israelites.

Genesis 25:31, “But Jacob said, ‘First sell me your birthright.’”

Genesis 25:32, “Esau said, ‘Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?’”

Genesis 25:33, “And Jacob said, ‘First swear to me’; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.”

Genesis 25:34, “Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

“**Birthright**” is the noun *b`khorah* (hr*k)B+) (bek-o-raw), which refers to the rights of the first-born in a family (See Exodus 4:22).

The firstborn had a privileged status (See Genesis 43:33; 49:3) and the right of succession (2 Chronicles 21:3) and received a double portion of his father’s inheritance (Deut. 21:17).

The father’s inheritance was divided among his sons and the firstborn always has right to two of these portions. If there are ten sons, the firstborn receives two portions and the other nine split eight portions. If there are only two sons then the firstborn inherits everything.

With this privileged status came responsibility in that the firstborn was the protector of the family and leader. Not only did the firstborn have the responsibility of providing leadership and material things in Isaac’s family but also he had the responsibility to provide spiritually for his family.

Spiritual responsibilities were paramount in the family of Abraham and Isaac. The selling of the birthright demonstrated that Esau rejected those responsibilities and was thus not only an irresponsible person but also an unbeliever.

Abraham and Isaac were in the line of Christ and the birthright in the family of Isaac included the promises and blessings given in the Abrahamic Covenant. In the family of Abraham and Isaac, the birthright included the privilege of carrying on the line of Christ that would bring salvation and therefore blessing to the entire world. Jacob knew this and desired these things, thus demonstrating his spiritual discernment and that he was a believer.

The birthright was transferable where the youngest can displace the eldest as in the cases of Joseph

and Judah, Reuben, and Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses and Aaron, David and his six older brothers, Solomon and Adonijah.

Since the birthright concerns the future, its value is appropriated by faith.

Therefore, by selling his birthright, Esau was demonstrating his unbelief in the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby forfeited the blessings of this covenant (Hebrews 12:16-17).

In Genesis 25:31, Jacob is exploiting Esau's hunger and exchanging the red lentil soup for the right to be heir of the family's estate and assume the family headship. Jacob erroneously believed that by his own human power that he had come into possession of the birthright. He erroneously thought he could "merit" the blessings when in reality he could only receive them according to God's grace meaning that he could not earn or deserve the blessings since they would be freely given to him by God when he exercised faith in Him.

Jacob was on a works program and thought God needed his help. He was ignorant of God's method and thus inserted his own way of doing things. This demonstrated in Jacob that self-confident attitude rather than a dependence upon the Lord and His provisions and His plan and methods. He desired a right thing but chose to attain it in a wrong way. A right thing must be done in a right way.

God did not need Jacob's help since God had chosen Jacob over Esau from eternity past based upon His sovereign grace and mercy to carry on the line of Christ and inherit the blessings and privileges and responsibility of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Romans 9:10-13

"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac."

"for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of

Him who calls, it was said to her, 'THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.'"

"Just as it is written, 'JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.'"

Jacob and Esau were simply manifesting attitudes towards God's plan that God in His omniscience already knew and predicted to Rebekah they would possess before they were born as recorded in Genesis 25:23.

Genesis 25:32, "Esau said, 'Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?'"

Esau's statement in Genesis 25:32 expresses a worldly viewpoint.

Isaiah 22:13, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die."

Genesis 25:33, "And Jacob said, 'First swear to me'; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob."

The fact that Esau agreed to sell his birthright to Jacob reveals that Esau did not value spiritual things since by selling his birthright he was forfeiting the blessings of the covenant that the Lord made with Abraham and which his father Isaac had inherited.

The selling of the birthright demonstrated that Esau was a *psuchikos*, "soulish" man and not a *pneumatikos*, "spiritual" man since he was expressing his dislike of the plan of God for the patriarchs that was expressed in the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

In eternity past, before Jacob and Esau were born God knew in His omniscience that Esau would possess such a negative attitude towards His plan and that Jacob would have a positive attitude. Therefore, Malachi 1:2-3 states, "**Jacob have I loved but Esau I have hated.**"

"Sold" is the verb *makhar* (rk ^ m*) (maw-kar), which in context means, "to exchange" since Jacob did not give money to Esau but rather

offered him the red lentil soup in “exchange” for the birthright.

Genesis 25:34, “Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.”

“**Despised**” is the verb *bazah* (hZ*B*) (baw-zaw), which means, “to the act of according little worth to something, to undervalue something” implying contempt.”

Therefore, by exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup, Esau was demonstrating that he valued little his firstborn status in the family of Isaac, which involved inheriting the promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby expressed his contempt for the plan of God.

Genesis 26

Genesis 26:1-33 presents to us the record of Isaac’s encounter with the Philistines and their king, Abimelech. In this passage, we see an affirmation of the transfer of divine blessing from Abraham to Isaac.

Genesis 26 is the only chapter in the Bible where Isaac is the main focus. In fact, in this chapter, we see Isaac walking in his father Abraham’s footsteps. The parallels between Abraham and Isaac are quite noticeable.

For example, in Genesis 26:2-6, Isaac receives God’s call and promises, which parallels Genesis 12:1-3, which records Abraham receiving God’s call and promises.

Also, in Genesis 26:7-11, Isaac, out of fear, of the Philistines, says that his beautiful wife Rebekah is his sister, which parallels the same mistake made by Abraham, who out of fear of the Egyptians, said that his beautiful wife Sarah was his sister, which is recorded in Genesis 12:10-20.

Then, in Genesis 26:14-22, Isaac and his men quarrel with the Philistines over wells and move rather than fight, which parallels the account recorded in Genesis 13:1-12 where Abraham’s men quarrel with his nephew Lot’s men over land and move rather than fight.

In Genesis 26:23-25, Isaac receives divine reassurance and builds an altar and prays, which parallels Genesis 15:1-21 where Abraham receives divine reassurance and builds an altar and prays to the Lord.

Lastly, in Genesis 26:26-33, Isaac forges a treaty with Abimelech at Beersheba, which parallels the account recorded in Genesis 21:22-24 where Abraham forges a treaty with another Abimelech at Beersheba.

So in this chapter, we see that like his father, Isaac receives divine promises and reassurance, faces adversity tests, fails tests, and ultimately triumphs. All these parallels between Isaac and Abraham confirm to the reader that Isaac’s God is the God of Abraham (Genesis 26:24).

The narrative of Isaac lying about his wife Rebekah and endangering her so closely parallels the failure of his father Abraham with his wife Sarah in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20) and in Gerar (20:1-18) that the critics of the Bible claim the three encounters are variations of the same historical event.

Of course, this is not the case and simply demonstrates that the sin nature trends of the father are passed to the son.

The chapter begins with Isaac facing famine in the land of Canaan and having little security and ends with him possessing security and riches. We see Isaac going from famine (26:1) to a well of plenty (26:33), from fear of violence with the Philistines (26:6-7) to forging a treaty with them (26:28-31) and from conflict and confrontation to peace (26:31).

This chapter consists of three encounters between Isaac and the Philistines and in particular their king, who goes by the title “Abimelech.”

These three encounters are marked by changes in setting: (1) At Gerar (26:1-16) (2) At Wadi of Gerar (26:17-22) (3) At Beersheba (26:23-33).

This chapter is “chronological” meaning it follows the events recorded in Genesis 25 and is “not” a digression as some expositors of Genesis suggest. Those who claim that Genesis 26 is a digression, argue that it would be obvious to Abimelech that Isaac and Rebekah were married and had children,

and consequently would not have taken Rebekah into his harem. But this argument fails to take into consideration that Genesis 26:15 and 18 record that the Philistines plugged up the wells that Abraham dug “after” his death.

According to Genesis 25:7, Abraham died when he was one hundred and seventy-five years of age, which would make Isaac seventy-five when Abraham died since according to Genesis 21:5 Abraham was one hundred years of age when Isaac was born. Also, according to Genesis 25:20, Isaac married Rebekah when he was forty and according to Genesis 25:26, Isaac was sixty when Jacob and Esau were born. Therefore, we can see that Abraham lived to see his grandchildren Esau and Jacob grow up to be fifteen years of age since Isaac was sixty years of age when Esau and Jacob were born according to Genesis 25:26 and he was seventy-five when his father Abraham died.

So it would “not” be obvious to Abimelech that Rebekah was married since she would not be nursing children or parenting toddlers at the time of her encounter with Abimelech since Esau and Jacob were in their late teens and possibly early twenties when the events of Genesis 26 took place.

Genesis 26:1, “Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines.”

Genesis 26:2, “The LORD appeared to him and said, ‘Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you.’”

Genesis 26:3, “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”

Genesis 26:4-5, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”

Genesis 26:6, “So Isaac lived in Gerar.”

In Genesis 26:1, the narrator (Moses) makes a distinction between the famine recorded that Isaac faced with the one his father Abraham faced, which is recorded in Genesis 12:10 and took place when Abraham was seventy-five years old (See Genesis 12:4). The famine recorded in Genesis 26:1 took place “after” the death of Abraham since we have already established that Genesis 26:15 and 18 records that the Philistines plugged up the wells Abraham dug “after” his death.

As we have already established, Abraham died when he was one hundred seventy-five years of age according to Genesis 25:7, which would place the famine that Isaac faced one hundred years after the one his father Abraham encountered.

The famine that Isaac faced took place in the land of Canaan whose natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

According to Genesis 25:11, after Abraham died, Isaac lived at “**Beer-lahai-roi**,” which was located between Kadesh and Bered, according to Genesis 16:14, about fifty miles southwest of Beersheba.

Isaac faces an adversity test in the form of famine, which parallels the test that his father Abraham faced, which is recorded in Genesis 12:10-20. The famine was a test of Isaac’s faith just like the famine that Abraham faced was a test of his faith. Abraham failed his test but Isaac passes his test.

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them. True Biblical faith is confident obedience to God’s Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.

The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God’s Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

God permits the believer to go through adversity and problems in order to test the believer as to whether or not he will trust Him in the adversity and problems.

Jeremiah 20:12, "Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart."

God permits His children to undergo adversity in order to develop character in His children and build in them a greater dependence upon Him and draw them closer to Himself.

God also permits His children to suffer in order to glorify Himself and to demonstrate that His grace is sufficient in any and every circumstance by manifesting His life and power in our human impotence.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself!"

"Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me."

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

1 Peter 4:12, 13

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you."

"but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation."

James 1:2-3, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing

that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

2 Corinthians 4:8-10, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

2 Corinthians 4:17, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison."

Hebrews 2:18, "For since He Himself was tested in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tested."

Hebrews 5:8, "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered."

1 Corinthians 10:13, "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it."

Genesis 26:1, "Now there was a famine in the land, besides the previous famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. So Isaac went to Gerar, to Abimelech king of the Philistines."

"Gerar" was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines. According to archaeological excavations, "Gerar" was a prosperous city, controlling a lucrative caravan route.

The name "Abimelech" means, "my father is king" and is not a proper name but rather a title for royalty among the Philistines, just as the term "Pharaoh" and "Caesar" were.

This is not the same "Abimelech" that Abraham encountered as recorded in Genesis 20:1-18 and 21:22-34. Abraham's encounter with "Abimelech" in Genesis 20:1-18 took place just

prior to the birth of Isaac and Abraham was one hundred years of age when Isaac was born.

Abraham died at one hundred seventy-five years of age. The events of Genesis 26 took place after the death of Abraham. Therefore, the events of Genesis 26 took place some seventy-five years after the events of Genesis 20:1-18.

Also, Abraham's encounter with "**Abimelech**" in Genesis 21:22-34 took place right at the time when Sarah died at the age of one hundred twenty-seven.

Abraham was one hundred thirty-seven years of age when Sarah died since he was ten years older than her. Therefore, we see that the events of Genesis 21:22-34 took place approximately forty years prior to the events of Genesis 26.

So we can conclude that Isaac was dealing with a different "**Abimelech**" and one who was not aware or chose not to honor the agreement Abraham made with his predecessor regarding the wells Abraham dug.

The Philistines of Abraham and Isaac's day were peaceful and reasonable as demonstrated by Abimelech whereas during the period of the judges and monarchy of Israel, they are highly aggressive warriors. They were ruled by a king whereas during Israel's period of judges and the monarchy they were ruled by five lords.

Later on history, "**the Philistines**" were Israel's greatest enemies during the period of the judges and early monarchy and it appears that they originated from the islands and coastlines of the Aegean Sea.

In Genesis 26:2-6, we see that Isaac receives from the Lord reconfirmation of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 26:2, "The LORD appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you.'"

The fact that the Lord "**appeared**" to Isaac is a "theophany," or "Christophany, which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

"**Lord**" is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God indicating that Isaac had a covenant relationship with God. The term "**Lord**" also emphasizes the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Isaac and blessing him in fulfillment of His promises to Abraham.

The Lord prohibits Isaac from going to Egypt to solve the problem of famine since He is testing Isaac's faith. The fact that the Lord prohibits Isaac from going to Egypt implies clearly that he considered going to Egypt in order to deal with the problem of famine in the land of Canaan.

The land of Canaan is a type of the believer's separation from the cosmic system of Satan and fellowship with God whereas Egypt is a type of the believer living in the cosmic system of Satan and out of fellowship with God.

The Lord commands Isaac to "**stay in the land (Canaan) of which I shall tell you**" indicates that Isaac did not know where he was going, which parallels his father leaving Haran in obedience to the Lord's invitation as recorded in Genesis 12:1 and Hebrews 11:8.

The fact that Isaac did not know where he was going indicates that the Lord wanted to him to walk by faith, obeying his commands, asking for Him for guidance in prayer and listening to His directions.

2 Corinthians 5:7, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

We must identify the voice of God in order to listen to God. How to identify the Voice of God: (1) God will never tell us to get involved in any activity or relationship that is inconsistent with the Word of God. (2) God will often ask us to do something, which conflicts with human wisdom. (3) God will never tell us to do anything that gratifies the old Adamic sin nature. (4) God will challenge our faith or trust in Him in order to build our relationship and intimacy with Him. (5) God will often call for us to be courageous.

The Bible is our index or guide for all the other ways God communicates and if we are going to listen to God and discern His voice in the other avenues He uses, we must be listening to His

Word, the Bible. God communicates His Word in many ways: through those who teach it formally and informally as the pastor-teacher, in personal exhortation and encouragement, through song or music, through books, tapes, film, etc.

However, the primary method God has chosen, and that which is foundational to all the other ways God communicates in the church age, is the local assembly when the church is assembled together for the hearing of the Word. Other things are involved, prayer, singing, praise, the Lord's Table, but at the center is the proclamation of the Word (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Tim. 4:11, 13; 2 Tim. 4:1-4).

We must also understand that God communicates through the events of our lives: (1) Special Times of Worship (singing, praise, prayer, teaching, ordinances). (2) Blessings that reveal His love and grace. (3) Trials and Irritations that become tools to get our attention and build character, but only as we hear and learn to relate and rest in the promises and principles of Scripture. Therefore, Isaac spent a lot of time listening to God in prayer in order to determine where he was to go.

Genesis 26:3, "Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham."

The word "sojourned" is the Hebrew verb *gur* (rWG) (goor), which refers to a specific legal status of a person who lives as a resident and is in a dependent legal status and is not a native, but is dwelling upon the land.

In societies, which possess a clan structure, this person is without legal protection since he has no blood ties. Such a person, like Isaac, would have been dependent upon a native to recognize and protect him while he was in Gerar.

The Mari documents (1800 B.C.) indicate that the relationship between "sitting" farmers and nomadic herders (such as Abraham) was that contracts were drawn up concerning grazing and watering rights. This relationship is known as "dimorphism" as these two distinct yet interrelated cultures exist side by side.

Isaac is entering into a land, where he no legal rights and protection, which will affect his decision-making and will cause him to say that Rebekah is his sister. He is a "resident alien" meaning he was a person who moved into Canaan where he had neither land nor clan ties and was without traditional tribal legal support and protection and would be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

In Genesis 26:3, the Lord gives Isaac reassurance that He will be with him and will bless him. The promise "**I will be with you**" refers to the fact that the Lord will not only protect Isaac but also prosper him if he obeys Him and remains in the land of Canaan.

Isaac will recognize the Lord is protecting him in that the pagan Philistines will grow to respect and fear him and desire to make a treaty with him because he is being prospered by the Lord.

"**Bless**" is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means that the Lord promised to endue Isaac with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity."

The Lord is promising to prosper Isaac even in the midst of famine. The Lord sought to manifest Himself in the life of Isaac by demonstrating His sovereign power in Isaac's life and prospering him in the midst of famine. Like Abraham, the Lord blessed Isaac in the sense that the Lord multiplied his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually and the Lord multiplied his possessions and livestock and prospered him financially.

In a "near" sense "**Your descendants**" refers the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a "far" sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

The promise "**I will give you and your descendants all these lands**" is a reference to the "Palestinian" Covenant, which like the "Abrahamic" covenant, was "unconditional" meaning that its fulfillment was totally and completely dependent upon the Lord's faithfulness.

The "Palestinian" covenant was a confirmation and enlargement of the original "Abrahamic"

covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan.

The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham and Isaac’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

“**All these lands**” refers to the land of Canaan whose natural boundaries as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

Genesis 26:3, “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”

The phrase “**I will establish**” is inaccurate but rather should be translated “I will make a reality the covenant that has already been established.” The reason for this is that the Lord is reassuring Isaac that now at this point in his life He will make good on His promises that He made to Abraham, which are recorded in Genesis 22:16-18. This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that the covenant the Lord is making with Isaac in Genesis 26 is “not” a new one but based upon the original

one made with Abraham when he left Haran as recorded in Genesis 12:1-3. This covenant with Abraham was reiterated to Abraham and enlarged upon as recorded in Genesis 13:14-17, 15:1-6, 17-21, 17 and 22:16-18.

“**Oath**” is the noun *sh^evu`ah* (hu*Wbv+) (she-voo-aw), which means, “to bind oneself volitionally by one’s own words,” putting oneself under obligation.

The noun *sh^evu`ah* stands in parallel to the noun *b^erith* (tyr!B+), “**covenant**,” which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other’s behalf.

“**The oath**” is a reference to the Lord putting Himself under obligation to Abraham in order to fulfill the promises He made to Abraham after he obeyed His command to sacrifice Isaac, which is recorded in Genesis 22:16-18.

Genesis 22:17, 18

“indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies.”

“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

“God’s reiteration of his oath to Abraham assures Isaac of God’s faithfulness” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 368, Zondervan).

Genesis 26:4-5, “I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.”

The promises to Isaac in Genesis 26:4 are a “reconfirmation” of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 15:4-5 and 22:17.

The promise “**I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens**” echoes the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 15:5 and 22:17 and is used to compare the Lord’s promise to Isaac

to multiply his descendants with the number of the stars of the universe.

Since the promises to Isaac in Genesis 26:4 are a reconfirmation of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 15:4-5 and 22:17, the promise **“I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens”** not only pertains to Isaac’s “natural” progeny but also refers to his “spiritual” progeny (cf. Rom. 4; Gal. 3:29).

The promise **“I will give your descendants all these lands”** is a reference again to the “Palestinian” Covenant.

The promise **“by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”** should be translated **“by your Seed or Descendant all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”** since it is Messianic and is again a “reconfirmation” of the promise the Lord made to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 22:18.

Galatians 3:8-16 reveals that the promise in Genesis 22:18 that **“in your Seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed”** is also a reference to Abraham’s descendent, Jesus Christ, who would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

The Lord statement in Genesis 22:18 that **“in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed”** echoes the Lord’s promise in Genesis 18:18 and is an enlargement upon the Lord’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham **“all the families of the earth will be blessed.”**

Galatians 3:8-16 reveals that the promise in Genesis 18:18 that **“in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed”** refers to Jesus Christ as well as the promise in Genesis 26:4 **“by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”**

The Lord states to Isaac that He will bless him because of Abraham’s obedience, which would be a reminder to Isaac that his participation in the “blessings” of the Abrahamic covenant is conditioned on his obedience.

On the surface, this appears to indicate that the Abrahamic covenant was “conditional” rather than “unconditional” but this is not the case. The

“blessings” of the covenant were conditioned upon Abraham’s obedience whereas the “fulfillment” of the covenant depended upon the faithfulness of God rather than Abraham’s obedience.

The Lord’s statement that **“Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws”** summarizes Abraham’s obedience and indicates that his obedience was comprehensive and thorough.

“Charge” is the noun *mishmereth* (tr#m#v+m!) (mish-meh-reth), which describes duties or obligations impressed upon Abraham by the Lord.

“Commandments” is the noun *mitswah* (hw*x+m!) (mits-vaw), which refers to “specific orders or commandments” given to Abraham by the Lord such as when the Lord commanded Abraham to leave Ur and Haran (Genesis 12:1-3; Hebrews 11:8).

“Statutes” is the noun *chuqqah* (hQ*j|) (khook-kaw), which designates a “divine ordinance” such as circumcision (Genesis 17:9-14) or to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:1-2).

“Laws” is the noun *torah* (hr*w)T (to-law), which signifies divine teachings or instructions.

Genesis 26:6, “So Isaac lived in Gerar.”

Just as Abraham went out in faith from Haran and in obedience to the Lord moved to Canaan so Isaac in faith remained in Canaan. Just as Abraham met the condition of blessing by obeying the Lord so Isaac does as well.

In Genesis 26:7-11, we have the record of the Lord protecting Rebekah from a potentially adulterous situation due to Isaac lying to the Philistines that she was his sister. Isaac’s deception was motivated out of fear that the Philistines might kill him due to the great beauty of Rebekah, his wife.

This incident parallels the failure of his father Abraham, who on two occasions (See Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18) committed the same mistake. The narrative of Isaac lying about his wife Rebekah and endangering her so closely parallels the failure of his father Abraham with his wife Sarah in Egypt (Genesis 12:10-20) and in Gerar (20:1-18) that the critics of the Bible claim the three encounters are variations of the same historical event.

Of course, this is not the case and simply demonstrates that the sin nature trends of the father are passed to the son. Every one in the human race possesses an old sin nature as a result of the imputation of Adam's original sin in the garden at the moment of physical birth, which makes them physically alive but spiritually dead and yet qualified for grace.

Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned."

Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

The fact that we all have a sin nature means that at any time we can enter into sin, thus like his Abraham, Isaac simply makes a bad decision, which is motivated by his sin nature trend to fear, worry and anxiety.

Genesis 26:7, "When the men of the place asked about his wife, he said, 'She is my sister,' for he was afraid to say, 'my wife,' thinking, 'the men of the place might kill me on account of Rebekah, for she is beautiful.'"

Notice that the men of the place are simply inquiring about Isaac's wife Rebekah and are not being aggressive or threatening Isaac at all. Rebekah is a beautiful woman and the men of the area would naturally ask about her for the purpose of determining if she was married or not. Therefore, because the Philistines were simply asking about Rebekah and not threatening Isaac at all indicates that Isaac had no basis for fearing the Philistines that they would kill him and take Rebekah.

The fact that Isaac tells the Philistines that Rebekah was his sister and not his wife is an obvious lie and deception on his part. Lying is a sin, which the Lord hates and prohibits believers from doing.

Proverbs 12:22, "Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD."

Proverbs 6:16-19

"There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him."

"Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood."

"A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil."

"A false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers."

Ephesians 4:25, "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another."

Isaac lies to the Philistines about his wife because he lives in fear of the Philistines. Therefore, his lie was motivated by his fear for his own life.

Satan is behind the scenes manipulating Isaac to enter into fear of being killed by Abimelech and the Philistines.

Like his father Abraham, Isaac's sin nature trend is towards lying. Satan uses the fear of death to manipulate the human race to not trust God and serve him.

Hebrews 2:14, 15

"Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."

"and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Instead of entering into fear and saying that Rebekah was his sister, Isaac should have prayed to the Lord for protection. Fear is a result of unbelief and unbelief is failure to trust that God will protect and provide for us. Therefore, Isaac lied about his wife out of fear for the Philistines because he did not trust the Lord to protect him.

This is quite interesting because the Lord had just finished reassuring Isaac that He would be with him and bless him and reconfirmed to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant, which is recorded in Genesis 26:2-5!

So we see quite clearly that Isaac is not resting in the promises of the Lord and is therefore, not operating in faith but rather unbelief.

Isaac is looking at the Philistines and thus entering into fear rather than concentrating on the Lord's promise to protect him.

Principle: Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God, His presence and His Word.

Unbelief operates in the sphere of the old Adamic sin nature and contradicts faith and leaves God out. Unbelief blinded Isaac as to the presence of the Lord in his life, which he saw firsthand, causing him to see only the difficulties in the land of the Philistines. Isaac's unbelief had produced cowardice to the extent that he is willing to sacrifice his wife for his own personal safety.

The apostle Paul taught the Philippian believers to pray to the Father rather than entering into fear.

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Prayers for protection from God fill the Bible.

Psalm 140:1-5

"Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men who devise evil things in their hearts; They continually stir up wars. They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah."

"Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; Preserve me from violent men who have purposed to trip up my feet. The proud have hidden a trap for me, and cords; They have spread a net by the wayside; They have set snares for me. Selah."

The Bible teaches that fear, worry and anxiety are a sin because it calls into question the perfect immutable character and integrity of God or in other words, His love for the believer (See Matthew 6:19-34).

The apostle Peter instructed believers to cast all anxiety upon the Lord in prayer.

1 Peter 5:7, "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Trusting in God to keep His promises will protect the believer's soul from stress, fear, worry and

anxiety. Isaac's fear of being killed by the Philistines was a total lack of faith or in other words, a total lack of trust and confidence in God's ability to protect him.

Psalm 56:11, "In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Genesis 26:8, "It came about, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out through a window, and saw, and behold, Isaac was caressing his wife Rebekah."

The fact that Isaac and Rebekah enjoyed a long and trouble-free existence in Gerar for a long time demonstrates that Isaac's fear of the Philistines had no basis.

"Caressing" is the piel form of the verb *tsachaq* (cj^x*) (tsaw-khak), which is a euphemism for foreplay that precedes sexual intercourse and is a play on Isaac's name, which means, "laughter, joy."

Bruce K. Waltke, "The Hebrew word is a variant form of the verb 'to laugh' (*sahaq*). The same variant is translated 'mocking' in 21:9. This play on Isaac's name may function to highlight the conflicts and triumphs of his life. Sarah 'laughed' (*sahaq-tishaq*) in unbelief at the announcement of Isaac's birth (18:12-15) and then in joy at his birth (21:6). Ishmael 'played in jest' when Isaac was weaned (21:9) and now Isaac 'plays in joy' with his wife" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 369, Zondervan).

The fact that Abimelech "just happened" to be looking out his window where he saw Isaac being intimate with his wife demonstrates that the providence of God delivered Isaac and Rebekah. The "providence" of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

The fact that Abimelech could look out his window and saw Isaac and Rebekah making love indicates that Isaac's tent was pitched not too far from the royal palace.

Genesis 26:9, "Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, 'Behold, certainly she is your wife!'"

How then did you say, ‘She is my sister?’ And Isaac said to him, ‘Because I said, ‘I might die on account of her.’”

Abimelech “called” Isaac in the sense that he “summoned” Isaac to his palace for the purpose of confronting him about his relationship to Rebekah. Abimelech could see quite clearly through intimate relations between Isaac and Rebekah that Isaac had lied about her, which could have put Abimelech or his subjects in a potentially adulterous situation.

When Abimelech confronted Isaac as to his suspicions that Rebekah was not his wife, Isaac admits what he had done and why he did it.

Like his father Abraham before him, Isaac erroneously thought that the kidnapping of women and the killing of their husbands was commonplace in Gerar indicating he did not have a good view of the heathen.

Genesis 26:10, “Abimelech said, ‘What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us.’”

Abimelech rebukes Isaac for his conduct and his presumptuous behavior, which put Abimelech and his people in great danger before God.

The question, “**what is this you have done to us**” expresses Abimelech’s shock as to Isaac’s conduct and indicates that he has an awareness of a moral code in his conscience. This question indicates that Abimelech had a fear of God in him, which involves general revelation regarding moral standards known by believer and unbeliever alike through conscience and accepted by them out of fear of God’s judgment.

Notice that Abimelech shows great leadership over and concern for his people, more than Abraham did as demonstrated by his question to Abraham, “**what is that you have done to US?**”

Notice that Abimelech considered committing adultery as “**guilt**” indicating that adultery was considered evil even by this heathen king and his countrymen.

The Word of God prohibits adultery.

Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”

Abimelech’s statement “What is this you have done to us? One of the people might easily have lain with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us” **demonstrates his awareness of a moral code even among the unbeliever.**

The apostle Paul taught that God has instilled an awareness of a moral code in the conscience of every human being, believer and unbeliever alike.

Romans 2:14, 15

“For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves.”

“in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.”

Genesis 26:11, “So Abimelech charged all the people, saying, ‘He who touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.’”

Abimelech issues a royal decree, which states that anyone in his kingdom who commits any violent act against Isaac or sexually molests wife will be subject to the death penalty. Therefore, we see that all of Isaac’s fears are shown to be without foundation. The Lord as He had promised Isaac, was protecting him.

Genesis 26:12-16 gives us the record of the Lord prospering Isaac in the midst of a famine while residing in Gerar in the land of Canaan and the Philistines becoming envious of him and eventually driving him out of their land.

As we have noted earlier in the study of Genesis 26, the Lord promised to be with Isaac and bless him. We noted that the Lord would be with Isaac in the form of protection and prosperity.

In Genesis 26:7-11, we see the Lord protecting Isaac from the Philistines. In Genesis 26:12-16, we will see that the Lord prospers Isaac even in the midst of a famine, which leads to his deportation from Gerar.

Genesis 26:12-14, “Now Isaac sowed in that land and reaped in the same year a hundredfold. And the LORD blessed him, and

the man became rich, and continued to grow richer until he became very wealthy; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him.”

Genesis 26:15, “Now all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.”

Genesis 26:16, “Then Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us.’”

The fact that the Lord blessed Isaac in the sense of prospering him agriculturally and financially was a fulfillment of the Lord’s promise recorded in Genesis 26:3.

Genesis 26:3, “Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.”

The Lord blessed Isaac with great wealth and possessions because Isaac was obedient to the Lord by staying in the land of Canaan, and thereby staying in the geographical will of God meaning the geographical place that God desired Isaac to serve Him. Isaac obeyed the Lord’s command to stay in the land of Canaan, which is recorded in Genesis 26:3. Consequently, the Lord blessed Isaac for being obedient to Him.

Deuteronomy 5:33, “Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.”

1 Kings 2:3, “Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go.”

3 John 1-2, “The elder to the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth. Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”

Isaac kept growing greater in wealth and possessions until he became extremely wealthy, which was further evidence of God’s blessing.

Proverbs 10:22, “It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, and He adds no sorrow to it.”

The multiplication of Isaac’s flocks and herds was further proof of divine blessing and presence, with the increase of flocks and herds as well as the large retinue of servants and slaves needed to take care of all of them.

So we see that the Lord is blessing Isaac with material prosperity and great wealth.

Psalms 50:10, “For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills.”

1 Chronicles 29:10, “So David blessed the LORD in the sight of all the assembly; and David said, ‘Blessed are You, O LORD God of Israel our father, forever and ever.’”

1 Chronicles 29:11, 12

“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD, and You exalt Yourself as head over all.”

“Both riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all, and in Your hand is power and might; and it lies in Your hand to make great and to strengthen everyone.”

Now, we must remember that the bulk of Abraham’s estate upon his death went to Isaac since Isaac was Abraham’s sole heir. Abraham was fabulously wealthy. Therefore, Isaac’s wealth must have been staggering since not only did he possess his father’s wealth but also the Lord added to his wealth and possessions.

The prosperity that Isaac received from the Lord led to his being the object of jealousy and envy among the Philistines.

“**Envied**” is the verb *qana* (אנ*ק*) (kaw-naw), which means, “to become envious of someone.”

To envy is to feel resentful, spiteful, and unhappy because someone else possesses or has achieved, what one wishes oneself to possess, or to have achieved. To be envious means to act on one’s jealousy since to “envy” someone is to desire to deprive another of what he has, whereas

“jealousy” desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself.

Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something. Therefore, jealousy is the mental attitude from which envy originates.

Therefore, the Philistines acted upon their jealousy of Isaac and stopped up the wells dug by his father Abraham in order to deprive Isaac of his prosperity and success, thus they were envious and not merely jealous.

Isaac was the object of Satanic attack at a young age since he was to carry on the line of Christ and was to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel from whom Christ would come and bring blessing to the entire world and destroy the works of the devil.

The Philistines were jealous of Isaac in the sense that they desired his prosperity and were resentful and intolerant and suspicious of Isaac and his success and they were also guarded over their land and did not tolerate Isaac and considered him a rival.

Jealousy originated in eternity past with Satan since he was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ’s relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic since it is Satanic viewpoint.

The Philistines were under Satanic influence by being jealousy towards Isaac since jealousy is demonic in origin.

James 3:13-16

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.”

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”

“This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.”

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

Envy is also included in the list of sins produced by the old sin nature in both the believer and unbeliever (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1).

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality.”

“idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions.”

“envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Romans 13:13, 14

“Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy.”

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”

Jealousy produces rottenness to the bones (Prov. 14:30).

Proverbs 14:30, “A relaxed attitude lengthens a man’s life; jealousy rots it away.”

Jealousy is not satisfied until it seeks its revenge (Prov. 27:4).

Proverbs 27:4, “Wrath is fierce and anger is a flood, but who can stand before jealousy?”

Proverbs 6:34-35, “For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not accept any ransom, nor will he be satisfied though you give many gifts.”

Jealousy leads to murder (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:20) and to inordinate ambition and competition (Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4).

The jealousy of the Philistines towards Isaac expressed itself when they stopped up the wells his father Abraham had dug. Eventually, this jealousy led them to deport Isaac from their land.

Genesis 26:15, “Now all the wells which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines stopped up by filling them with earth.”

To water his herds and flocks, Isaac needed the wells his father Abraham had dug. By stopping up the wells, the Philistines were hindering Isaac's operations. An adequate water supply was absolutely necessary to keep Isaac's operations going. The Philistines decided to plug up all these wells that Abraham had dug in order to force Isaac out of their land.

The stopping up of the wells dug by Isaac's father Abraham was a violation of the agreement that Abraham made with the predecessor of the Abimelech in Isaac's days, which is recorded in Genesis 21:22-32.

Genesis 26:16, “Then Abimelech said to Isaac, ‘Go away from us, for you are too powerful for us.’”

Abimelech tells Isaac to leave Gerar since he probably felt he could not guarantee the safety of Isaac and his family since Abimelech's countrymen are so hostile to Isaac.

The Philistines were afraid that Isaac would soon have more people with him along with his great wealth and would try to conquer their territory and so Abimelech was forced to deport Isaac.

Genesis 26:17-22 records the problems with the Philistines that Isaac was experiencing persisted as the Philistines block up the wells Abraham dug and dispute ownership of the new wells that Isaac's servant's dig. Isaac's problems were in reality, not with the Philistines but with Satan who is manipulating the Philistines to mistreat Isaac who is in a covenant relationship with God and in the line of Christ.

The apostle Paul taught the Ephesian believers that their problems in life are in reality with Satan and his angels and not human beings.

Ephesians 6:11, 12

“I solemnly charge all of you to make it your top priority and clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that all of you might be able

to habitually stand your ground against the stratagems of the devil.”

“because as far as all of you are concerned your combat is emphatically not against blood and flesh, i.e. humanity but rather against the rulers, against the authorities, against the world-rulers, which produce this present darkness, against the wicked spiritual forces residing in the heavenlies.”

Genesis 26:17, “And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there.”

“**There**” refers to the city of Gerar and “**the valley of Gerar**” was southeast of the urban limits of Gerar.

“**Gerar**” was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines.

Isaac submits to the deportation without protest even though he could have demanded his rights under the covenant agreement that Abimelech's predecessor had made with Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 21:22-32.

In Genesis 26:17, the fact that Isaac patiently endures ill-treatment from the Philistines typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who did not insist upon His rights but rather silently and patiently suffered ill-treatment from sinners.

1 Peter 2:23, “and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

Isaac is undergoing “undeserved suffering,” which is designed by God to advance the believer to greater spiritual maturity and a deeper more intimate relationship with Himself.

“Undeserved suffering” is also designed by God to demonstrate God's protection and provision to the believer and the sufficiency of God's grace and His Word to deal with any and every adversity in life.

“Undeserved suffering” is designed by God to draw the believer closer to Himself and to test the believer as to whether or not they will trust Him in adversity.

There are three sources of suffering: (1) Satan: Cosmic system (2) Man: Old sin nature. (3) God: Divine integrity.

There are three general categories of suffering: (1) Self-induced misery (negative): The believer makes bad decisions from negative volition to the Word of God, either failing to hear the Word or failing to apply it. (2) Divine discipline (negative): God brings in suffering designed to get the believer back in fellowship with Him (Heb. 12:4-13). (3) Suffering for blessing: God brings in suffering that is designed to bless the believer with a more intimate walk with Himself and to glorify Himself.

The believer is to rejoice when he undergoes undeserved suffering to test his faith because it produces endurance.

James 1:2-3, "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance."

It is through undeserved suffering that the believer is conformed to the image of Christ or attains faithful Christ-like character and identification with Christ experientially in His death and resurrection.

Philippians 3:10, 11

"that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death."

"If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones."

God also permits His children to undergo undeserved suffering in order to glorify Himself and to demonstrate that His grace is sufficient in any and every circumstance by manifesting His life and power in our human impotence.

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast

about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

The believer must persevere and endure undeserved suffering in order to receive the crown of life.

James 1:12, "Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him."

2 Corinthians 4:17-18, "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Those who persevere and endure through undeserved suffering will receive their eternal inheritance, which is to reign with Christ.

2 Timothy 2:12a, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him."

Genesis 26:17, "And Isaac departed from there and camped in the valley of Gerar, and settled there."

Genesis 26:18, "Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham; and he gave them the same names which his father had given them."

Bob Deffinbaugh, "Digging a well was considered tantamount to a claim of ownership of the land on which it was located. It enabled a man to dwell there and to sustain herds. Rather than recognize this claim, the Philistines sought to wipe it out by filling up the wells dug by Abraham. Their desire to overthrow all claim on their land was so intense that they would rather fill in a well, an asset of great value in such an arid land, than to allow this claim to remain unchallenged" (The Book of Genesis, page 190, Biblical Studies Press).

Bruce K. Waltke, "Wells were given names to establish proprietary rights. By giving them the same names as his father had, Isaac aims to make his ownership incontestable. This underscores the injustice (see 21:23-33) but also commemorates God's provision and protection" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 370, Zondervan).

Genesis 26:19-20, "But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of flowing water, the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with the herdsmen of Isaac, saying, 'The water is ours!' So he named the well Esek, because they contended with him."

In Genesis 26:19, the fact that Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found water indicates that this was an "additional" operation to the one that was centered upon reopening the wells Abraham dug.

"**Esek**" is the proper noun *eseq* (עֶסֶק) (ay-sek), which means, "dispute" and was a memorial to the pettiness of the Philistines.

Genesis 26:21, "Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over it too, so he named it Sitnah."

"**Sitnah**" is the proper noun *sitnah* (סִתְנָה) (sit-naw), which means, "opposition" and was a memorial to the hostility of the Philistines towards Isaac's servants.

The names of the first two wells reflect the conflict over the two wells. This problem over the wells was serious for Isaac since in order to maintain his massive amounts of flocks and herds, he would need to have at his disposal large amounts of water. To Isaac these wells were a necessity for survival. So this problem with the wells was a great test of Isaac's faith.

Notice, that Isaac never defends his rights to these wells, nor does he fight for them even though he had ample manpower at his command to destroy the Philistines. Isaac is not a coward for not fighting but rather he is "magnanimous" and which behavior parallels Abraham's towards his nephew Lot (See Genesis 13:1-12).

A believer who is "magnanimous" is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness. In Genesis 26:12-22, we see that

Isaac is generous in forgiving the insult heaped upon him by the Philistines who did not have a right to these wells and yet Isaac is not pettily resentful or vindictive towards them but simply moves away. Rather, Isaac insists upon maintaining a good relationship with the Philistines and is tolerant, patient and generous towards them.

A believer who is "magnanimous" is noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law and does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice. Isaac does not insist upon his own rights to the land in order to preserve unity between himself and the Philistines.

The apostle Paul commanded the Philippian believers to be magnanimous.

Philippians 4:5, "Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord's return is immanent."

Isaac's magnanimity has produced peace between himself and the Philistines.

Isaac operated in faith and not by sight, trusting in the Lord, confident that the Lord would take care of him wherever he settled.

2 Corinthians 5:8, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

The conduct of Isaac towards the Philistines reveals the spiritual principle that those who walk by faith and trust in the Lord will be unselfish and will avoid strife and contention whereas those who do not walk by faith, and do not trust the Lord will be selfish and will be the cause of strife and contention.

Isaac's magnanimity shamed the Philistines, which resulted in the Philistines seeking out a peace treaty with Isaac that is recorded in Genesis 26:26-32.

Isaac's magnanimous conduct towards the Philistines demonstrated a spiritual principle taught by Paul in Romans 12:17-21, that the believer is to treat his enemies well and never repay evil with evil and is never to take out his own revenge but is to trust in the Lord to deal justly with his enemies.

Romans 12:17-21

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone.
Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”

“BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Genesis 26:22, “He moved away from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it; so he named it Rehoboth, for he said, ‘At last the LORD has made room for us, and we will be fruitful in the land.’”

“**Rehoboth**” is the proper noun *r^echovoth* (tw)bj)r+) (rekh-o-both), which means, “space.”

Bruce K. Waltke, “Probably this is the location Reheibeh, about 19 miles southwest of Beersheba. Several large and ancient wells have been found in this area” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 370, Zondervan).

This location places the well a good thirty to thirty-five miles from Gerar, which would be sufficiently far from the Philistines’ economic or political interests.

The ruins of the well witness to a massive building project. One of the troughs is cut in solid blocks of stone six feet by five feet and five feet high, so indications are that the well produced very large amounts of water, and that Isaac’s flocks were a great multitude.

The Lord rewards Isaac for his faith by giving plenty of water and space for his enormous flocks and herds. Isaac has achieved a great spiritual triumph by enduring this undeserved suffering at the hands of the Philistines and the Lord has rewarded him.

The name of the three wells not only reflected Isaac’s conflict and struggle with the Philistines but also his triumph. The fact that Isaac finally found space for his flocks and herds was another demonstration of God’s blessing.

In Genesis 26:23-25, we see the Lord appearing in a theophany to Isaac at Beersheba and gives him reassurance and in response to this revelation, Isaac builds an altar in order to pray to the Father.

Genesis 26:23, “Then he went up from there to Beersheba.”

“**There**” refers to “**Rehoboth**,” which was located approximately 19 miles southwest of Beersheba.

This location places the well a good thirty to thirty-five miles from Gerar, which would be sufficiently far from the Philistines’ economic or political interests.

The name “**Beersheba**” means, “well of seven” or “well of oath.” The name “**Beersheba**” bears witness to the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech and Abraham’s right to the well.

“**Beersheba**” was located in the flat southern part of the Negev, which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

Genesis 26:24, “The LORD appeared to him the same night and said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham; Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and multiply your descendants, for the sake of My servant Abraham.’”

The fact that the Lord “**appeared**” to Isaac is a “theophany,” or “Christophany, which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

“**Lord**” is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God indicating that Isaac had a covenant relationship with God.

The term “**Lord**” also emphasizes the “immanency” of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with

and intervening in the life of Isaac and blessing him in fulfillment of His promises to Abraham.

The divine promise “**do not fear for I am with you**” is reconfirmation of the Lord’s promise to be with Isaac, which is recorded in Genesis 26:3 and is reassurance for Isaac that the Lord will be present with him and protect him from his enemies and give him victory.

“**Bless**” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means that the Lord promised to endure Isaac with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

The Lord promised to bless Isaac in the sense that the Lord would multiply Isaac’s descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually.

The promise “**I will multiply your descendants**” reconfirms the Lord’s promise to Isaac that is recorded in Genesis 26:4.

Since the promises to Isaac in Genesis 26:4 are a reconfirmation of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 15:4-5 and 22:17, the promise “**I will multiply your descendants**” not only pertains to Isaac’s “natural” progeny but also refers to his “spiritual” progeny (cf. Rom. 4; Gal. 3:29).

“**Your descendants**” refers to Isaac’s “biological” descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his “spiritual” descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

The phrase “**for the sake of Abraham my servant**” echoes the phrase used in Genesis 26:5, “**because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws.**”

The phrase “**for the sake of Abraham my servant**” indicates to Isaac that the promises that Isaac has received from the Lord are a reconfirmation of the promises made to Abraham in Genesis 15:4-5 and 22:17.

The phrase “**for the sake of Abraham my servant**” also indicates that the promises that Isaac received from the Lord are based upon his father Abraham’s obedience, which would be a reminder to Isaac that his participation in the “blessings” of

the Abrahamic covenant is conditioned on his obedience.

Genesis 26:25, “So he built an altar there and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there; and there Isaac’s servants dug a well.”

“**Altar**” is the noun *mizbeach* (j^B@w+m!) (miz-bay-akh), which was composed of material constructed of earth and stones and was the place Isaac, was to perform his act of worship.

“**Called**” is the verb *qara* (ar*q+) (kaw-raw), which is a reference to the act of praying to the Father in order to worship Him.

“**Name**” is the noun *shem* (sv@) (shame), which refers to the authority, majesty, power, excellent character and nature of the Person of the Lord.

The term “**Lord**” is applied to the Father (Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21; 20:42) and to the Son (Rm. 5:11; 1 Cor. 15:31) and the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17).

In Genesis 26:25, the Father is in view since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Prayer must be made in the name or Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Prayer is an expression of the believer’s worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

In Genesis 26:25, we see Isaac worshipping God the Father in prayer in response to the revelation he received, which gave him reassurance of God’s provision and protection and reconfirmed the divine promises that he just received from the Lord in Genesis 26:4.

Like his father, Isaac builds an altar in response to God’s revelation (See Genesis 12:7-8; 21:33). The

building of the altar was designed so that Isaac with his family and servants could publicly worship the Lord.

Worshipping publicly at the altar expressed Isaac and his household's total dedication and devotion to the Lord. The worship of the Lord at the altar publicly expressed their submission to the will of the Lord and recognition of the Lord's faithfulness to His promises.

Beersheba was the home of Abraham and the place where he received the covenant promises and here in Genesis 26:25, we see that it becomes the home of Isaac as well. Beersheba was hallowed ground for Abraham who according to Genesis 21:33 planted a tamarisk tree and also called on the name of the Lord there after making a non-aggression pact with Abimelech and Phicol and securing ownership rights to the well he dug there.

Genesis 21:33, "Abraham planted a tamarisk tree at Beersheba, and there he called on the name of the LORD, the Everlasting God."

The planting of a tree by Abraham at Beersheba is significant since it indicates his faith in the Lord and that he finds his security in the Lord. To plant a tree in Beersheba presupposed a constant supply of water and indicated a determination to stay in the region.

The planting of the tree by Abraham indicated his faith that the eternal God would bless and supply him with well water and that he was determined to stay settled in the land. The latter is substantiated in that Genesis 21:34 records that Abraham "sojourned in the land of the Philistines for many days."

Also, it is significant that in Old Testament Israel dwelling under one's tree was a sign of peaceful security (see Zechariah 3:10).

So we see Isaac again following in the footsteps of his father Abraham and settling in Beersheba, worshipping the Lord in prayer by thanking Him for prospering him in the midst of the famine Canaan and protecting him from the Philistines.

Genesis 26:26-33 records Abimelech with his advisors suing for a non-aggression pact with

Isaac after seeing that the Lord prospered him in the midst of famine.

Genesis 26:26, "Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath and Phicol the commander of his army."

The name "Abimelech" means, "my father is king" and is not a proper name but rather a title for royalty among the Philistines, just as the term "Pharaoh" and "Caesar" were.

"Gerar" was near the coast about twelve miles south of Gaza and about fifty miles south of Hebron, in the land of the Philistines. Isaac was residing at Beersheba when Abimelech arrived from Gerar to visit him according to Genesis 26:23.

The name "Ahuzzath" (tZ^j%a&w^)(akh-ooz-zath) literally means, "possession" and is said to be Abimelech's "advisor," which in the Hebrew is the noun *merea* (u^r@m@) (may-ray-ah) and denotes a "chief political advisor."

The fact that Abimelech, is bringing his chief political advisor to this meeting with Isaac to sue for a non-aggression pact demonstrates the importance that the Philistines placed upon these negotiations.

Like the name "Abimelech" the name "Phicol" (lk)yp!W) (pee-kole) is a title for the chief military commander in Gerar and is not a proper name as indicated in that this same name appears with the Abimelech who forty years prior to this treaty forged a non-aggression pact with Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 21:22-24.

The name "Phicol" would be the equivalent to the "Head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff" in the United States of America.

Genesis 26:27, "Isaac said to them, 'Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?'"

Isaac remembered the unjust treatment he received from the Philistines and their deporting him from Gerar and so he was suspicious about their desire to meet with him and challenges them to tell him the reasons for coming to him.

"Hate" is the verb *sane* (an@c*) (saw-nay), which expresses an emotional attitude toward

someone or something, which is abhorred, disdained or opposed and which desires to have no relationship or amiable reconciliation. Therefore, Isaac is saying to Abimelech that he and his people have expressed an emotional attitude toward him, in which they abhorred, disdained or opposed him and desired to have no relationship with him or amiable reconciliation with him.

Believers are commanded by the Lord to love their enemies and to pray for those who persecute them.

Matthew 5:43-45

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.’”

“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Only those who have responded in faith to God’s love for them in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ while yet enemies of His have the capacity to love their enemies, their neighbor as themselves and to love one another as Christ loved.

Genesis 26:28-29, “They said, ‘We see plainly that the LORD has been with you; so we said, ‘Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you, that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.’”

Abimelech’s statements to Isaac that **“the Lord has been with you”** and **“you are now the blessed of the Lord”** reveals the principle that even unbelievers, pagans can recognize God’s blessings in the life of a believer.

Abimelech’s statements to Isaac that **“the Lord has been with you”** and **“you are now the blessed of the Lord”** validates the Lord’s promises to Isaac, which are recorded in Genesis 26:3-4.

These statements made by Abimelech regarding Isaac parallel the statement his predecessor made of Abraham as recorded in Genesis 21:22.

Abimelech’s flattering statements and acknowledgement that the Lord is with Isaac indicates that Abimelech now views Isaac as his superior.

“**Oath**” is the noun *`alah* (hl*`a*) (aw-law), which denotes a lower concept than the noun *sh`vu`ah* (hu*Wbv+) (she-voo-aw), which appears in Genesis 26:3.

The noun *`alah* refers to a “curse-oath” indicating that Abimelech is proposing that the one who breaks this non-aggression pact will become a curse, i.e. under God’s judgment.

“**Covenant**” is the noun *b`erith* (tyr!B+), which is a compact or agreement between two parties binding them mutually to undertakings on each other’s behalf.

A foundational concept of a covenant is the notion of a legal contract, which established and regulated a relationship where none previously existed. Therefore, we see Abimelech seeking to establish and regulate a peaceful coexistence between Isaac and himself.

Abimelech’s statement **“we have not touched you and have done nothing to you but good”** is a reference to the royal decree he issued after he discovered that Rebekah was Isaac’s wife and not his sister, which stated that if anyone touched either Isaac or Rebekah, they would face the death penalty and is recorded in Genesis 26:7-11.

Abimelech’s statement **“we sent you away in peace”** refers to Isaac’s deportation and also implies that he did not attempt to inflict any punishment on Isaac after he deceived him and the Philistine people.

Genesis 26:30, “Then he made them a feast, and they ate and drank.”

Genesis 26:31, “In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace.”

As an expression of good will and as a celebration of the covenant Isaac prepares a state banquet for the Philistines as a result of this reconciliation between himself and the Philistines. Sharing a meal together was a sacred rite in the days of Isaac and was a further expression of friendship between Isaac and his people and the Philistines. Then

early the next morning the two parties confirmed their mutual non-aggression pact by swearing to each other that they would keep it.

The Lord has brought this peace to Isaac as a result of Isaac's obedience and magnanimous behavior, which was a result of his faith in the Lord's promises to be with him and bless him, thus, fulfilling the principle taught in Proverbs 16:7.

Proverbs 16:7, "When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Genesis 26:32, "Now it came about on the same day, that Isaac's servants came in and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, 'We have found water.'"

Genesis 26:33, "So he called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beersheba to this day."

The prepositional phrase "on the same day" is very significant since it indicates a casual relationship between the name "Beersheba" and the oath taking ceremony just completed between Isaac and Abimelech.

The name "Beersheba" means, "well of seven" or "well of oath" and memorializes the seven ewe lambs that were used to ratify the non-aggression pact between Abraham and the predecessor of the present Abimelech, which is recorded in Genesis 21:22-34.

The discovery of water expresses the feeling of security that Isaac's servants felt since it demonstrates a pledge from the Lord of future security in the land.

"Shibah" is the proper noun *shiv`ah* (hu*b+v!), which means, "oath" or "seven" since seven ewe lambs were sacrificed when the covenant was cut.

Isaac gives the name *shiv`ah* to this well to express his awareness of God's hand in the non-aggression pact that he just forged with Abimelech just as Abraham did years before. We would expect that the well would be named *sh`vu`ah*, which is the Hebrew term for oath rather than *shiv`ah*. This deviation demonstrates that the story of this mutual non-aggression pact between Isaac and the present Abimelech presupposes knowledge and

renewal of the pact made between Abraham and the present Abimelech's predecessor that is recorded in Genesis 21:22-34. Therefore, the name "Shibah" memorializes the mutual non-aggression pact forged between Isaac and Abimelech, which renews the agreement between Abraham and the predecessor of this Abimelech.

Genesis 26:34-35 presents to us the record of Esau's marriage to two Hittite women who were descendants of Canaan and unbelievers, which brought grief to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah.

As we will note, this marriage of Esau to two Hittite women was due in part to his parents' failure to teach him that it was against the will of God for their family to marry Canaanite women.

By way of review, we have seen in our previous studies that Esau's father, Isaac was the son of Abraham. Both, Abraham and Isaac were in the line of the human nature of Jesus Christ or in other words, Jesus Christ in His human nature descended from these two.

Isaac married a woman named Rebekah and they had twin boys, the older was Esau and the younger was Jacob and they contrasted in many ways. Esau was a hairy man but Jacob had smooth skin, Esau became a skillful hunter and an outdoorsman but Jacob was a "momma's boy" and a "homebody," Esau became the favorite son of Isaac but Jacob was Rebekah's favorite.

Isaac's love for Esau is based upon the natural senses whereas Rebekah's love for Jacob is based upon the Lord's choice of Jacob and that Jacob was a responsible individual who took care of the family business and matters around the home.

Genesis 25:19-28

"Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife."

"Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived."

"But the children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is so, why then am I this way?' So she went to inquire of the LORD."

"The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.'"

"When her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb."

"Now the first came forth red, all over like a hairy garment; and they named him Esau."

"Afterward his brother came forth with his hand holding on to Esau's heel, so his name was called Jacob; and Isaac was sixty years old when she gave birth to them."

"When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."

"Now Isaac loved Esau, because he had a taste for game, but Rebekah loved Jacob."

The major contrast between Jacob and Esau was their attitudes towards the plan of God, which were manifested by Esau exchanging his birthright with Jacob for a bowl of red lentil soup.

In the family of Abraham and Isaac, the birthright included the privilege of carrying on the line of Christ that would bring salvation and therefore blessing to the entire world and inheriting the promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant. By exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup, Esau was demonstrating that he valued little his firstborn status in the family of Isaac, which involved inheriting the promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby expressed his contempt for the plan of God.

Genesis 25:29-34

"When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, 'Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.' Therefore his name was called Edom."

"But Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.'"

"Esau said, 'Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?'"

"And Jacob said, 'First swear to me'; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob."

"Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright."

Esau's contempt for the plan of God by exchanging his birthright with his brother Jacob for a bowl of red lentil soup demonstrated tragically that he was an unbeliever. By selling his birthright, Esau was demonstrating his unbelief in the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby forfeited the blessings of this covenant since the birthright is appropriated by faith.

Hebrews 12:15-17

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

"For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

Several years later, Jacob and Rebekah successfully conspired to trick Isaac into giving his blessing and inheritance to Jacob while Esau was away hunting for his father's favorite meal of wild game (Genesis 27:1-40). In order to escape the wrath of Esau, who wanted to kill him for the deception, Jacob fled to his uncle Laban (Genesis 27:41-28:5).

Years later, Esau and Jacob reconciled (Genesis 32:1-22; 33:1-16) but lived in different regions. Esau settled his family in the land of Seir in the country of Edom (Genesis 32:3; 33:16; 36) while Jacob lived in the hill country of central Palestine. Esau was the progenitor of the Edomites (See Genesis 36:1-43) whereas his twin brother Jacob was the progenitor of the Israelites. So we can see that the family of Isaac and Rebekah was dysfunctional.

There is no such thing as a perfect parent or child (except for Jesus Christ) since the Bible teaches that all parents and children are sinners.

Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

This should be an encouragement to Christian families because the Bible teaches that God in His grace used this family despite their obvious shortcomings and if this is the case, he can do so in our families. In His incomparable grace, God was able to use Isaac’s family to bring blessing to the entire world since the Savior of the world Jesus Christ in His human nature descended from Isaac, Rebekah and Jacob.

Matthew 1:1-2, “A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob.”

Now, one of the major problems that the family of Isaac and Rebekah faced was the marriage of their son Esau to Hittite women who were Canaanite and unbelievers.

Genesis 26:34-35, “When Esau was forty years old he married Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite; and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.”

The problem of Esau marrying these Hittite women, who were descendants of Canaan, was due in part to the failure of his parents, Isaac and Rebekah, since they apparently failed to teach both Jacob and Esau that it was against the will of God for members of their family to marry Canaanite women.

In Genesis 9:24-27, Noah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit pronounces a curse upon the Canaanites and a blessing upon the Shemites who would be in the line of Christ.

Genesis 9:25-27

“So he (Noah) said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.’”

“He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.’”

“May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were Shemites meaning that they were descendants of Shem and were therefore to marry other Shemites. Neither Jacob nor Esau had ever previously been taught by their parents that marriage to Canaanite women was against the will of God.

We know this to be the case since Isaac’s prohibition to Jacob, recorded in Genesis 28:6, to not marry a Canaanite was never in the past given to either Jacob or Esau since nowhere previously has this instruction been given. This is further confirmed by Esau’s response to learning that his Canaanite wives were displeasing to his father.

Genesis 28:8-9, “So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebaioth.”

So the failure of Esau was due in part to the failure of his parents to teach him the ways of the Lord. The Bible teaches that Christian parents have been given the responsibility by the Lord to teach their children the Word of God.

Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Fathers and mothers are to train their children by means of the Word of God.

2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.”

Parents must stop passing the buck to Sunday school teachers and Christian day school teachers and start fulfilling their responsibility before the Lord to train them and educate them in the Word of God. Your child’s knowledge of the Lord should be received primarily in the home from the parents and not in public school or even Sunday school.

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might."

"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart."

"You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up."

The Israelite parents were commanded by the Lord to teach their children to love the Lord with all their heart, soul and with all their might, which is accomplished by obedience to the teaching of the Word of God.

John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Isaac and Rebekah reaped what they sowed by not teaching Esau Noah's prophecy since Esau's marriage to these Hittite women brought them grief.

Galatians 6:7, 8

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

Genesis 26:34-35, "When Esau was forty years old he married **Judith** (Hebrew: *y^ehudhith* (tyr!Why+) (yeh-hoo-deeth), which means, "praised") **the daughter of Beeri** (Hebrew: *b^e'eri* (yr!a@B+) (be-ay-ree), which means, "my well") **the Hittite, and Basemath** (*bas^emath* (tm^C+B*) (bos-math), which means, "fragrance") **the daughter of Elon** (Hebrew: *`elon* (/w)lya@) (ay-lone), which means, "terebinth") **the Hittite; and they brought grief to Isaac and Rebekah.**"

"**Grief**" is the noun *morah* (hr*m) (mo-raw), which means, "bitterness." Therefore, Esau's marriage to these Hittite women was literally "bitterness of spirit" to Rebekah and Isaac because their lifestyles radically differed from Abraham's

family spirituality and training (cf. Genesis 15:16, 20; 18:19; 24:3; 27:46).

So we can just picture the scene, Esau brought home his two pagan wives and then left to go hunting for days on end and left Isaac and Rebekah to contend with these women and their pagan ways and attitudes. Thus, Esau's marriage to these two Hittite women was a great source of bitterness for both Isaac and Rebekah since they rejected the worship of the one true God, Jesus Christ since they were unbelievers.

Proverbs 10:1, "A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother."

Proverbs 17:25, "A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him."

Genesis 27

Genesis 27 records Jacob under the direction of Rebekah, deceiving Isaac in order to steal the blessing of the birthright from Esau. This thwarted Isaac's attempt to bestow upon Esau the blessings of the birthright, which was against the will of the Lord.

Normally the birthright belonged to the eldest son. This entitled him to a double share of the property in addition to the privilege of assuming the father's position of headship in the family.

For the descendants of Abraham it determined the one through whom the covenant blessings would be given. With this privileged status came responsibility in that the firstborn was the protector of the family and leader.

Not only did the firstborn have the responsibility of providing leadership and material things in Isaac's family but also he had the responsibility to provide spiritually for his family, which was paramount in the family of Abraham and Isaac.

Abraham and Isaac were in the line of Christ and the birthright in the family of Isaac included the promises and blessings given in the Abrahamic Covenant. In the family of Abraham and Isaac, the birthright included the privilege of carrying on the line of Christ that would bring salvation and therefore blessing to the entire world.

The birthright was transferable so under certain circumstances the possessor of this birthright could be dispossessed. The youngest can displace the eldest as in the cases of Joseph and Judah, Reuben, and Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses and Aaron, David and his six older brothers, Solomon and Adonijah.

In Abraham's family, the one who possesses the birthright inherits the Abrahamic Covenant. Since the birthright concerns the future, its value is appropriated by faith. Jacob desired the birthright because of his faith in the promises and prophecy of the Lord whereas Esau did not have faith in the promises of the Lord. Esau was rejected because he did not have faith in the Lord and His promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant as demonstrated by the selling of the birthright.

Now, the "blessing" of the birthright and the birthright itself were inseparable since Hebrews 12:17 records that after Esau sold his birthright he wanted to inherit the blessing but was rejected by God. Esau wanted the blessing but not the prerequisite lifestyle of faith of the patriarchs. Therefore, the Lord did not allow Esau to be blessed by Isaac and permitted Rebekah and Jacob's scheme to deceive Isaac to be successful.

Esau's lack of faith in the promises of God is demonstrated in that he exchanged his birthright with Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup. Therefore, by selling his birthright, Esau was demonstrating his unbelief in the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby forfeited the blessings of this covenant (Hebrews 12:16-17).

Hebrews 12:15-17

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

"For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

The fact that Esau agreed to sell his birthright to Jacob reveals that Esau did not value spiritual

things since by selling his birthright he was forfeiting the blessings of the covenant that the Lord made with Abraham and which his father Isaac had inherited.

In eternity past, before Jacob and Esau were born God knew in His omniscience that Esau would possess such a negative attitude towards His plan and that Jacob would have a positive attitude.

As we saw in Genesis 25:23, the Lord's prophecy to Rebekah was that the birthright and the blessings attached to it belonged to Jacob and not Esau.

Genesis 25:23, "The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.'"

Therefore, Isaac's desire to give Esau the blessing of the birthright and not Jacob was against the will of the Lord.

Unfortunately, Rebekah and Jacob erroneously thought they could accomplish the will of the Lord by means of the sin of deception. In the end, the family was separated for Rebekah never saw Esau again after this episode and Jacob and Esau split and did not reconcile until years later. What we see was that parental preference destroyed the family of Isaac and Rebekah.

Genesis 27:1 begins a set of dialogues and ends at Genesis 28:5, which give us the record of Jacob under the instruction of his mother Rebekah, deceiving his father Isaac and stealing the blessing of the birthright from his twin brother Esau. These dialogues contained in Genesis 27:1-28:5 are framed by the marriage of Esau to Hittite women, which is recorded in Genesis 26:34-35 and his marriage to an Ishmaelite woman, which is recorded in Genesis 28:6-9.

Genesis 27:1-28:5 contains seven dialogues: (1) Isaac and Esau (27:1-4) (2) Rebekah and Jacob (27:5-17) (3) Isaac and Jacob under guise of Esau (27:18-29) (4) Isaac and Esau (27:30-40) (5) Rebekah and Jacob (27:41-45) (6) Rebekah and Isaac (27:46) (7) Isaac and Jacob (28:1-5).

The information provided in Genesis 26:34-35 regarding Isaac and Rebekah's displeasure over

Esau's marriage to Hittite women and the information provided in Genesis 28:6-9 regarding his marriage to an Ishmaelite supply essential data for interpreting developments recorded in Genesis 27:1-28:5.

Genesis 27 gives us a perfect example of the "overruling will of God" in the lives of His people where Isaac's bad decision to give the blessing to Esau and not Jacob is "overruled" by God.

The sovereign will of God functions three different ways in relation to the will of angels and men: (1) Directive will of God: God directly states what He desires of us. (2) Permissive will of God: God permits us to have our own way. (3) Overruling will of God: God overrules our decisions-not letting them have their intended results-in order to protect us and the rest of mankind from our own negative volition and to preserve and perpetuate His own marvelous plan.

A comparison of Genesis 25:23 with Genesis 27 manifests the function of God's "directive", "permissive" and "overruling" will. The "directive" will of God for the lives of Esau and Jacob is revealed in the Lord's prophecy to Rebekah prior to the birth of the twins, which is recorded in Genesis 25:23. The "permissive" will of God is manifested in Genesis 27:1-4 where the Lord "permits" Isaac to attempt to give the blessing to Esau rather than Jacob. The "overruling" will of God is manifested in Genesis 27:5-46 where Jacob deceives Isaac and receives the blessing rather than Esau.

In Genesis 27:1-4, we have the record of the conspiracy of Isaac and Esau to secretly secure the blessing of the birthright for Esau rather than Jacob, which was against the will of God.

Genesis 27:1, "Now it came about, when Isaac was old and his eyes were too dim to see, that he called his older son Esau and said to him, 'My son.' And he said to him, 'Here I am.'"

Genesis 27:2, "Isaac said, 'Behold now, I am old and I do not know the day of my death.'"

Genesis 27:3-4, "Now then, please take your gear, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me; and prepare a savory dish for me such as I love, and bring it

to me that I may eat, so that my soul may bless you before I die."

Isaac was one hundred years of age at this point in the narrative since Genesis 25:26 records that Isaac was sixty years of age when he had Esau and Jacob and Genesis 26:34 records that Esau got married at forty years of age. He would live to one hundred eighty years of age according to Genesis 35:28.

Genesis 27:1 records that Isaac was already blind as indicated by the phrase "**his eyes were too dim to see.**" This blindness is also symbolic of his spiritual blindness that is expressed in his desire to give Esau the blessing of the birthright and not Jacob. It appears that Isaac's blindness caused him to erroneously think that he might be dying soon. Therefore, as was the custom in his day, he desires to give his blessing before he died.

The term "**savory dish**" is the noun *mat`ammim* (syM!u^f+m^)(mat-am-meem), which in the plural means, "delicacies, gourmet food" and appears six times in Genesis 27 (4, 7, 9, 14, 17, 31) to emphasize Isaac's sensuality and not the role the meal played in the blessing ritual (Genesis, A Commentary, Bruce K. Waltke, page 377, Zondervan).

Isaac's love for fine foods has superseded his love for doing the will of God and has regressed spiritually in that he has in fact become like Esau who exchanged his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup!

This conversation that Isaac had with Esau regarding the blessing of the birthright was private and was in fact a conspiracy on the part of Isaac to see that Esau, who was his "favorite", would get the blessing of the birthright. Normally the blessing would have been a public affair, given before the entire family because it was, in reality, an oral will which legally determined the disposition of all that the father possessed (See Genesis 49:1, 28; 50:24-25; Deuteronomy 33:1).

"From excavations at Nuzi in central Mesopotamia we learn that the oral blessing or will had legal validity and would stand up even in the courts. Nuzi tablet P56 mentions a lawsuit between three brothers in which two of them contested the right of a third to marry a certain Zululishtar. The

young man won his case by arguing that this marriage was provided for in his father's deathbed blessing." (Howard Vos, *Genesis and Archaeology*; Chicago: Moody Press, 1963, p. 96. The information cited by Vos comes from Cyrus Gordon, "Biblical Customs and the Nuzi Tablets," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, February, 1940, p. 8; Quote from Vos cited from *The Book of Genesis* by Bob Deffinbaugh, pages 194-195, Bible Studies Press).

Distribution of family wealth and headship would best be carried out in the presence of all who were concerned, thus we later find Jacob giving his blessing in the presence of all his sons (Genesis 49). Neither Jacob nor Rebekah was present, and this was hardly an oversight but rather Isaac conspiring to give the blessing to Esau who was his favorite and not Jacob who was Rebekah's favorite and more importantly, the Lord's choice. If it were not for Rebekah eavesdropping on the conversation, the entire matter would seemingly have been completed with only two parties involved. Therefore, we have a conspiracy and secrecy where Isaac intended at this clandestine dinner to convey his blessings upon Esau rather than Jacob, which is why Isaac had no blessing left to convey upon Esau, cf. Genesis 27:37-38.

Here was a premeditated plot to thwart the plan and purpose of God for Jacob. Isaac was not ignorant of the revelation of God to Rebekah, which we saw recorded in Genesis 25:23. The fact that the Lord's choice of Jacob over Esau was justified was that Esau exchanged his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup. Therefore, God's purposes for His people could never be achieved through such a person as Esau.

In spite of all these elements, Isaac sought to overrule the verdict of God that the elder serve the younger. He anticipated doing so by a misuse of the pronouncement of the blessing before his death. Therefore, it appears that Isaac intended to manipulate God by reversing the decree of God and the rightful ownership of the rights of the first-born as purchased (although unethically) by Jacob.

This he purposed to do by giving his oral blessing to Esau, which he thought he was doing but in reality, he was giving it to Jacob (See Genesis

27:29). The fact that Isaac sought to give Esau rather than Jacob the blessing after Esau demonstrated his disdain for the plan of God reveals that at this time in his life, Isaac was putting his personal love and affection for Esau ahead of doing God's will.

Unlike his father, Isaac put his relationship with his children ahead of obedience to the will of the Lord since Abraham was willing to sacrifice Isaac in obedience to the will of the Lord.

In Genesis 27:5-17, we will see counter conspiracy of Rebekah and Jacob to deceive Isaac and secure the blessing of the birthright, which would thwart the conspiracy of Isaac and Esau from succeeding. In this passage, we see that Isaac's wife, Rebekah is a master of deception and superior to him in clandestine operations.

Also in this passage, we see the third round of Jacob's battle with Esau. The first round was at their birth (See Genesis 25:21-28) and the second round was Jacob securing the birthright from Esau (See Genesis 25:27-34).

Genesis 27:5-7

"Rebekah was listening while Isaac spoke to his son Esau. So when Esau went to the field to hunt for game to bring home, Rebekah said to her son Jacob, 'Behold, I heard your father speak to your brother Esau, saying, 'Bring me some game and prepare a savory dish for me, that I may eat, and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.'"

Little did Esau and Isaac know that Rebekah was eavesdropping in on their entire conversation in which they had conspired to secure the blessing of the birthright for Esau rather than Jacob who was Rebekah's favorite.

Rebekah is functioning here as a counter spy in the service of her son Jacob. Here we see Rebekah eavesdropping in on the conversation between Isaac and Esau. She tells Jacob of the conspiracy between Isaac and Esau and their plot to secure the blessing of the birthright for Esau rather than Jacob.

The family rivalry and parental favoritism is pointed out by Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit by designating Esau as Isaac's son and

Jacob as Rebekah's son. The blessing that Rebekah is referring to was given at departures or imminent death in patriarchal times and could not be altered.

Rebekah adds to Isaac's statement, the phrase "in the presence of the Lord" in order to impress upon Jacob the significance of this critical moment in the family's history and that it was essential that they act immediately to thwart Isaac's attempt to give Esau the family blessing.

She also uses this phrase to manipulate Jacob to take part in a counter conspiracy, which would thwart the conspiracy launched by Isaac and Esau. Isaac never used this prepositional phrase since Isaac was going against the will of the Lord by attempting to give Esau the blessing rather than Jacob.

Rebekah and Jacob erroneously believed that by their own human power that Jacob could come into possession of the birthright. They erroneously thought Jacob could "merit" the blessings when in reality he could only receive them according to God's grace meaning that he could not earn or deserve the blessings since they would be freely given to him by God when he exercised faith in Him.

Jacob and Rebekah were on a works program and thought God needed their help but they were ignorant of God's method and thus inserted their own way of doing things. This demonstrated in Jacob and Rebekah that self-confident attitude rather than a dependence upon the Lord and His provisions and His plan and methods. Rebekah desired a right thing for his son but she chose to attain it for him in a wrong way.

Genesis 25:23 teaches that God did not need their help since He had chosen Jacob over Esau from eternity past based upon His sovereign grace and mercy to carry on the line of Christ and inherit the blessings and privileges and responsibility of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 25:23, "The LORD said to her, 'Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.'"

Genesis 27:8

"Now therefore, my son, listen to me as I command you."

Rebekah commands Jacob and does not suggest for him to do something since she is using her maternal authority to manipulate Jacob to carry out her plan of deception.

Genesis 27:9

"Go now to the flock and bring me two choice young goats from there, that I may prepare them as a savory dish for your father, such as he loves."

Genesis 27:10

"Then you shall bring it to your father that he may eat, so that he may bless you before his death."

Rebekah knows her husband too well and commands Jacob to get two young goats from the flock, which would have a similar taste to wild game, which Isaac loved. She had lived long enough with Isaac to know what kind of food that he loved and how to prepare it. Notice that Rebekah, like Isaac, believes that Isaac is about to die.

Genesis 27:11

"Jacob answered his mother Rebekah, 'Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man and I am a smooth man.'"

Genesis 27:12

"Perhaps my father will feel me, then I will be as a deceiver in his sight, and I will bring upon myself a curse and not a blessing."

Jacob does not complain that his mother's plan of deceiving his father and her husband is wrong and is sin but rather he was afraid he would be caught in this deception and bring down a curse upon himself. Therefore, we see that Jacob has no reservations about the morality of the plan but only the feasibility of such a plan.

Jacob could not see how their plan could overcome the fact that he was smooth skinned and his brother was very hairy. But Rebekah was prepared for this problem and had undoubtedly thought about it for quite some time and devised a plan.

Genesis 27:13

“But his mother said to him, ‘Your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.’”

Gordon J. Wenham, “Rebekah’s reply is as remarkable for what it does not contain as for what it does. She says nothing about dressing up Jacob in goatskin and his brother’s clothes. That might have alarmed Jacob even more. Instead she focuses on the most serious point, that Jacob may be cursed for his efforts. The word order, ‘let the curse on you fall on me,’ emphasizes that Rebekah is the one, not Jacob, who will suffer should Isaac pronounce a curse instead of a blessing. Her remark is hypothetical, for Isaac does not curse Jacob, but it is doubtful whether she could have diverted any curse onto herself by simply saying so. The blessing is not transferable even to Esau for whom Isaac intended it, so who could a curse be diverted? Presumably Rebekah realized this, for her plan depends on the irrevocability of the blessing, so her remark, ‘let the curse...on me,’ expresses the ferocity of her desire to make Jacob carry out the plan. Probably, Jacob realized curses could not be transferred either and his submission to his mother’s will again underlines his complicity in the scheme. But her closing words, ‘Just obey me. Go and get it for me,’ repeating her opening injunction (vv 8-9) somewhat more brusquely, reveal her impatience and urgency. It is a naked appeal to maternal authority” (Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2, 16-50, page 207).

Genesis 27:14

“So he went and got them, and brought them to his mother; and his mother made savory food such as his father loved.”

Moses under the inspiration uses the phrase “his father” rather than “her husband” to bring out the rift between Rebekah and Isaac.

Genesis 27:15

“Then Rebekah took the best garments of Esau her elder son, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son.”

Genesis 27:16

“And she put the skins of the young goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck.”

Genesis 27:17

“She also gave the savory food and the bread, which she had made, to her son Jacob.”

Notice that Jacob just brings her the materials needed to pull off her scheme and she does all the preparation of the materials. Rebekah’s plan reveals that she was not only devious but that her plan was well thought out in advance. There is no way that her plan was conceived on the spur of the moment but rather it was a plan conceived well in advance since she thought out every minute detail, using goatskin gloves and neck coverings.

Also, in a few moments time, she fashioned a costume for Jacob that fooled Isaac, which also indicates a premeditated plan. Rebekah was too shrewd to leave these matters to chance or to last minute accomplishment. This production had been staged far in advance of its performance.

Rebekah promised to assume the negative consequences personally if anything were to go wrong since she did not consider that there would be any negative consequences for her scheme since she thought the ends justified the means. She did not consider the Lord’s attitude towards her insubordination to her husband and her deception for if she did she would not have attempted the deception.

Rebekah did suffer greatly for the part she played in this scheme. What neither Rebekah nor her son considered, however, were the consequences for their sin even if they did succeed, which they did.

Galatians 6:7, 8

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

Hosea 8:7, “For they sow the wind and they reap the whirlwind.”

Their plan went off without a hitch, but the results were the opposite of what they had hoped for.

There can be no doubt that Rebekah’s desire to secure the blessing of the birthright for Jacob was according to the will of the Lord (see Genesis

25:23, 29-34; 26:35; 27:46) but the means by which she sought to secure it for him, namely, by deception was wrong. For Rebekah, the ends justified the means.

In this passage, we see Rebekah exploiting her husband's blindness, which was against the Word of the Lord.

Leviticus 19:14, "You shall not curse a deaf man, nor place a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall revere your God; I am the LORD."

Deuteronomy 27:18, "Cursed is he who misleads a blind person on the road.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"

Undoubtedly, Rebekah felt justified in deceiving Isaac since the Lord had told her that Jacob was His choice. But because of a lack of faith she failed to understand that God's purposes for Jacob would be accomplished whether or not Isaac cooperated or not. She failed to understand that Isaac's blessing of Esau could not overrule God's will, which was decreed from eternity past (See Genesis 25:23). She evidently thought that the Lord needed her help.

The family of Isaac and Rebekah is not communicating with each other and working with each other but conspiring against one another. The reason for this is that Isaac who according to the Word of God is the head of the marriage and family is not leading his family according to the will of the Lord.

The Lord's will is that Jacob receive not only the birthright but also the blessing of the birthright since the Lord declared to Rebekah prior to the birth of the twins that Jacob would be the heir of the Abrahamic Covenant and carry on the line of the Messiah. He goes against the will of the Lord and secretly conspires to give Esau the blessing even though Esau has demonstrated that he is indeed not the one to receive the inheritance since he married Hittite women and exchanged his birthright with Jacob for a bowl of lentil soup.

So the problem in the family is the result of poor leadership by Isaac. Isaac has failed to exercise his authority in accordance with the will of the Lord and will reap the consequences of his failure as the

husband of Rebekah and playing favorites with his twin sons.

Rebekah has failed as Isaac's wife in that she doesn't respect her husband's authority, which is against the Word of the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

Rebekah fails as a mother in that like her husband, she plays favorites with her twin sons, choosing Jacob over Esau.

The marriage of Rebekah and Isaac is a mess because of no communication and terrible leadership from Isaac. Unlike Abraham and Sarah who communicated with one another and sought each other's spiritual counsel regarding the inheritance (See Genesis 15:5-6; 21:8-14), Isaac and Rebekah are not communicating with each other.

The first thing Rebekah should have done was to confront Isaac respectfully in love about his contemplated sin. Submission to authority never includes silence toward evil.

We are to "speak the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15), even to those in authority over us (cf. Acts 16:35-40).

Ephesians 4:15, "but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ."

Having fulfilled her responsibility to warn her husband of the consequences of the evil he had planned, Rebekah should have been content to leave the disposition of the matter to God, Who is all-powerful and all-wise. Her actions betrayed her lack of faith in the sovereignty of God.

Genesis 27:18-29 records the success of Rebekah's plan where Jacob successfully deceived his father Isaac into thinking he was Esau so that Isaac unknowingly bestowed upon him the family blessing rather than Esau.

Genesis 27:18

"Then he came to his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I am. Who are you, my son?'"

Isaac's question, "who are you, my son" indicates also that he has not identified the voice as being

Jacob's or Esau's implying that Jacob was impersonating the voice of his brother Esau.

Being brothers, there was certainly some similarity in their two voices. Isaac was expecting Esau and not Jacob and he could smell the dinner and so he presumes that it was Esau.

Genesis 27:19

“Jacob said to his father, ‘I am Esau your firstborn; I have done as you told me. Get up, please, sit and eat of my game, that you may bless me.’”

We can be sure that Jacob did not want Isaac to question him at all in order to conceal his true identity. He lies to his father and identifies himself as Esau in order to assure his father that he had done as he was told and was ready to receive the blessing.

Notice also that Jacob requests that his father “get up, sit” indicating that Isaac was lying down in bed and as we noted before, expecting his death would be soon. Of course, as we noted, he lived another eighty years.

Genesis 27:20

“Isaac said to his son, ‘How is it that you have it so quickly, my son?’ And he said, ‘Because the LORD your God caused it to happen to me.’”

Isaac was a bit suspicious since he asks another question, namely, how did he accomplish the task of killing the wild game and preparing it so quickly since Isaac had just sent Esau out? Jacob is in trouble here but rises to the challenge and invokes the name of the Lord as being the reason for his quick success in catching the wild game for his father. This will prompt a further question and investigation from Isaac.

Jacob excused his sin by claiming that the Lord gave him success. By doing so, he is using the Lord's name in vain and compounding his lie with blasphemy.

Exodus 20:7, “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.”

Jacob's response does not satisfy Isaac and aroused his father's suspicions further since there is no record of Esau ever mentioning the Lord's name. Isaac's response here to Jacob's impersonation of his brother indicates that Isaac was not out of it mentally. His response also indicates that he suspected that Rebekah might attempt to deceive him since she was totally against him blessing Esau rather than Jacob.

Thus, far we have seen that Isaac cannot trust his eyesight because he is blind. Then, we have seen that he does not trust his hearing, which is indicated by his next question, which appeals to his sense of touch.

Now, those who have children will know that sometimes it is hard to identify them by their voices since they can sound similar to each other.

Genesis 27:21

“Then Isaac said to Jacob, ‘Please come close, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.’”

Jacob's worst fears are coming to pass when Isaac requests that he come closer so that he might touch him in order to confirm his identity. He expressed this fear to his mother but as we will see the animal skins that he wore did the trick.

The distinctive quality and inflection of Jacob's voice put his impersonation of Esau in jeopardy but the skin disguise does the trick and saves Jacob from being discovered by his father. So Isaac knows that sometimes Esau can sound like Jacob and vice versa but now he is thinking to himself that they both cannot feel the same because he knows that Esau is very hairy and Jacob is not.

Genesis 27:22

“So Jacob came close to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, ‘The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau.’”

Genesis 27:23

“He did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.”

Isaac has identified Jacob's voice but the skin disguise has made him doubt his suspicions that

Jacob is impersonating Esau. His hearing says that he is talking to Jacob but his sense of touch tells him it is Esau.

The statement “he blessed him” is “not” a reference to the blessing of the inheritance but rather it is the blessing to admit Jacob into Isaac’s presence. This is indicated by Isaac’s statement recorded in Genesis 27:25, “Bring it (the meal) to me and I will eat of my son’s game, that I may bless you.”

Remember, Genesis 27:3-4 records telling Esau to kill him some wild game and prepared it the way he likes so that he might bestow upon him the blessing of the inheritance and at this point in Genesis 27:23, Isaac has not eaten the meal.

Genesis 27:24

“And he said, ‘Are you really my son Esau?’ And he said, ‘I am.’”

Even after blessing Jacob, Isaac expresses his doubts as to the identity of the son speaking to him by asking Jacob point blank, “are you really my son Esau?” Isaac still won’t eat the meal until he receives an answer for this point blank question. It appears that it did not enter his mind that Jacob would attempt to deceive him but I am sure he knew that Rebekah would.

Genesis 27:25

“So he said, ‘Bring it to me, and I will eat of my son’s game, that I may bless you.’ And he brought it to him, and he ate; he also brought him wine and he drank.”

Three times we have seen that Isaac voiced his suspicions (Genesis 27:20, 22, 24) but in the end was deceived by his sense of touch (Genesis 27:16, 23) and smell (Genesis 27:27) and blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Isaac’s decision was reached based upon all five senses: hearing, seeing, tasting, touching and smell and yet he was still deceived.

After Jacob answered this point blank question to his satisfaction, Isaac will now eat the meal. By demanding to eat the meal, Isaac is imposing the test of taste.

The phrase “my son’s game” implies that Esau prepared Isaac’s favorite meal in accordance with

a special recipe, which was distinctive of Esau’s skill in cooking, which endeared him to his father in the first place.

Isaac’s judgment is not impaired because of his blindness or poor health since he asks pointed questions and is suspicious and sensed that Rebekah was trying to thwart his attempt to bless Esau rather than Jacob. Rather, his judgment is impaired because of his haste to bless Esau before Rebekah knows about it and he dies.

Isaac’s command to Esau to kill his favorite wild game and prepare his favorite meal for him expresses his urgency in bestowing the blessing upon Esau. If Isaac wasn’t in such a rush, he would have requested the presence of Jacob along with Esau but because of his plan to secretly bless Esau without the presence of the entire family, he did not do this. Therefore, Isaac will make a poor judgment for the sake of urgency.

Genesis 27:26

“Then his father Isaac said to him, ‘Please come close and kiss me, my son.’”

The kiss was not only a token of true personal love and affection but of loyalty, thus making Jacob’s deception and treachery more deplorable. The phrase “my son” here implies “my favorite” son who of course was Esau.

Genesis 27:27

“So he came close and kissed him; and when he smelled the smell of his garments, he blessed him and said, ‘See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field which the LORD has blessed.’”

The smell of Esau’s garments prompts an emotional response and blessing from him where he recalls the vocation of his son as a hunter. The smell of Esau’s garments, which Jacob used to deceive his father, fully convince Isaac that Esau is standing before him. Therefore, he proceeds to unknowingly pronounce the blessing of the inheritance upon Jacob.

The blessing that Isaac will unknowingly pronounce upon Jacob was inspired by God the Holy Spirit since he spoke by means of faith according to Hebrews 11:20 even though he was

intending to go against the will of God by pronouncing a blessing upon Esau.

Hebrews 11:20, “By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.”

Isaac’s intention was to bless Esau, which was against the will of the Lord and yet Isaac pronounced a blessing upon Jacob even though he did it in ignorance. Like Isaac, the prophet Balaam was inspired by the Holy Spirit to bless Israel against his will (Numbers 23:11-12). Also, the high priest in Jesus’ day spoke prophetically of the meaning of our Lord’s death, though he himself did not understand the real import of what he was saying (John 11:49-52).

Genesis 27:28

“Now may God give you of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and an abundance of grain and new wine.”

When Isaac pronounces the blessing, he uses the term *Elohim*, “God,” and not the personal covenant name of God, *Yahweh*, “Lord” since he knows that Esau is not concerned about spiritual blessings but rather material blessings.

The first material blessing was the dew of heaven. Dew is of great importance in Palestine since the area possesses a dry summer subtropical climate. The entire Mediterranean Basin experiences this climate, in which a stationary high pressure system does not allow moisture to penetrate the region during the summer. This system shifts to the south during the winter allowing moisture to penetrate. Thus, the land is dependent upon dew throughout the summer. Heavy dews are normal because of the great difference between night and day temperatures.

Bruce K. Waltke, “Dew from westerly and northwesterly Mediterranean winds plays an important role in the irrigation of crops in many parts of Palestine” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 379, Zondervan).

The second material blessing was “the fatness of the earth,” which is a figurative expression referring to the fertility of the land.

These first two material blessings would result in the third material blessing, namely, “an abundance

of grain and new wine,” which refers to rich harvests.

It is interesting to note that these first three material blessings would be of interest to the settled farmer but of no interest to a nomadic hunter like Esau, making these blessings more appropriate for Jacob rather than Esau.

Genesis 27:29

“May peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you; Be master of your brothers, and may your mother's sons bow down to you. Cursed be those who curse you, and blessed be those who bless you.”

The blessings contained in Genesis 27:29 are directly related to the nation of Israel since Jacob who later had his name changed by the Lord to “Israel” is the progenitor of that nation.

Also, they are Messianic in that they find their ultimate fulfillment in the Person of Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

“Peoples” is the noun *am* (SU[^]) (am), which refers to the entire Gentile population of the earth in contrast with the population of Israel.

Therefore, in relation to the nation of Israel, the blessing “May peoples serve you” refers to the fact that the entire earth’s population, the Gentiles, shall serve the nation of Israel.

In another sense, this prophecy is Messianic in that the entire earth’s population will serve the Lord Jesus Christ who is a descendant Abraham, Isaac and Jacob during His millennial reign (Psalm 22:27-28; Malachi 1:11; Zechariah 14:16).

“Nations” is the noun *l'om* (SA)|+) (leh-ome), which refers to the human race in their unified groups and reflecting their distinct characteristics.

Therefore, in relation to the nation of Israel, the blessing “May nations bow down to you” refers to the fact that all the Gentile nations shall serve the nation of Israel.

In another sense, this prophecy is Messianic in that all the Gentile nations will serve the Lord Jesus Christ who is a descendant Abraham, Isaac and Jacob during His millennial reign (Psalm 22:27-28; Malachi 1:11; Zechariah 14:16).

The plural form of the nouns *l'om*, “nations” and *`am*, “peoples” expresses the comprehensiveness of Israel and Jesus Christ’s dominion over the Gentile nations of the earth.

The command “Be master of your brothers” confirms the Lord’s prophecy to Rebekah recorded in Genesis 25:23 that “the older shall serve the younger.”

In Genesis 25:23, the Lord declares that the “older shall serve the younger” indicating that the younger son, Jacob would receive the inheritance and not Esau who was older.

“Master” is the noun *g^evir* (ryb!G+) (ghe-veer), which is a technical term designating the position of inheritance and legal superiority over another.

Therefore, the command to Jacob to “be master of your brothers” denotes the fact that Jacob would hold the position of inheritance in the family and denotes his legal superiority over his brother Esau and that he would inherit his father’s position as patriarch over his clan.

The blessing “may your mother's sons bow down to you” does not imply that Rebekah had other children beside the twins. But rather it denotes the fact that Rebekah’s descendants through Esau who were the Edomites would pay homage and show honor and respect to Jacob’s descendants who are the nation of Israel (See Genesis 36:1-43).

The blessing “cursed be those who curse you and blessed be those who bless you” is a reference to the blessing the Lord pronounced upon Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 12:3.

Genesis 12:3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

Therefore, we see that the blessing “cursed be who curse you and blessed be those who bless you” indicates that Jacob is inheriting an Abrahamic blessing. This blessing indicates that like his grandfather Abraham, the Lord would identify Himself with the cause of Jacob. Therefore, this blessing indicates that like Abraham, blessing Jacob would be equivalent to doing it to God whereas those who curse Jacob would in effect be cursing God.

So like Abraham, those who curse Jacob and his descendants would be cursed by God and those who bless him would be blessed by God. The nation of Israel is descended from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, those who curse Israel will be cursed by God and those who bless Israel will be blessed by God.

In Genesis 27:30-40, we see Isaac learning that he had been deceived by Jacob and Esau attempting in vain to secure a blessing from Isaac but instead his father pronounces an antiblessing upon Esau.

Genesis 27:30

“Now it came about, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had hardly gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting.”

This was not an accident that Esau came a moment too late since his late arrival was according to the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

Genesis 27:31

“Then he also made savory food, and brought it to his father; and he said to his father, ‘Let my father arise and eat of his son's game, that you may bless me.’”

Genesis 27:32

“Isaac his father said to him, ‘Who are you?’ And he said, ‘I am your son, your firstborn, Esau.’”

Genesis 27:33

“Then Isaac trembled violently, and said, ‘Who was he then that hunted game and brought it to me, so that I ate of all of it before you came, and blessed him? Yes, and he shall be blessed.’”

The expression “trembled violently” is composed of five words in the Hebrew text and literally means that Isaac “trembled, a trembling, that was great and excessive.”

The irony of it all was that since Isaac had tried to give everything to Esau, there was nothing left that could be considered a blessing to his favorite son, for all had been given to Jacob. Isaac set his heart

on that which was contrary to the revealed will of God, and because of this his world came crashing down upon him when God's purposes prevailed.

The Holy Spirit convicted Isaac that he was going against the will of God by attempting to secretly bestow the family blessing upon Esau rather than Jacob, which is indicated by Isaac's violent emotional reaction to finding out that he had been deceived into giving the blessing to Jacob rather than Esau. He now realizes that he was wrong by choosing Esau over Jacob in defiance of God's revealed will.

Isaac's statement "Yes, and he (Jacob) shall be blessed" not only indicates the irrevocability of the blessing but also it indicates that Isaac knows now that he was wrong to choose Esau rather than Jacob.

Isaac had just encountered the "overruling" will of God where Isaac against the will of God sought to bestow the blessing of the inheritance upon Esau, who was not God's choice, but rather He chose Jacob.

Proverbs 19:21, "Many plans are in a man's heart, but the counsel of the LORD will stand."

Genesis 27:34

"When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father!'"

Esau was an emotional and irrational person as revealed in the fact that he was quick to exchange his invaluable birthright and the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant as the first-born in the family for a bowl of lentil soup but now he wants the blessing of the birthright, which he rejected by exchanging the birthright.

Isaac and Esau conspired against Jacob and their plan has backfired on them since they reaped deception because they sowed seeds of deception.

Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Genesis 27:35

"And he said, 'Your brother came deceitfully and has taken away your blessing.'"

The statement "he has taken away your blessing" indicates that the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon Jacob unknowingly was "irrevocable" and that Isaac has come to his senses and realizes that God has chosen Jacob and not Esau.

Genesis 27:36

"Then he said, 'Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me these two times? He took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.' And he said, 'Have you not reserved a blessing for me?'"

"Supplanted" is the verb *ʾaqav* (bq^u*) (aw-kav), which means, "to seize by the heel" and is used a play on Jacob's name, which is derived from this verb.

The name given to "Jacob" means, "heel," implying grasping and describes the younger twin as "the heel catcher."

Esau was definitely cheated when Jacob stole the blessing but he was definitely not cheated by Jacob when he exchanged his birthright for a bowl of lentil soup, rather the latter was a result of his own bad decision. Therefore, Esau fails to take responsibility for his actions and has himself only to blame for the exchange of the birthright.

Genesis 27:37

"But Isaac replied to Esau, 'Behold, I have made him your master, and all his relatives I have given to him as servants; and with grain and new wine I have sustained him. Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?'"

The statement "I have made him (Jacob) your (Esau) master" is confirmation of the command given by Isaac to Jacob to "be master of your brothers," which is recorded in Genesis 27:29, which in turn confirms the Lord's prophecy to Rebekah recorded in Genesis 25:23 that "the older shall serve the younger."

The command "be master of your brothers" and the statement "I have made him your master" denotes the fact that Jacob would hold the position of inheritance in the family and his legal superiority over his brother Esau and would inherit his father's position as patriarch over his clan.

Isaac's statement "all his relatives I have given to him as servants" echoes the blessing in Genesis 27:29, "may your mother's sons bow down to you" and denotes the fact that Rebekah's descendants through Esau who were the Edomites would pay homage and show honor and respect to Jacob's descendants who are the nation of Israel (See Genesis 36:1-43).

Isaac's statement to Esau "with grain and new wine I have sustained him" echoes the blessing bestowed upon Jacob that is recorded in Genesis 27:29, "may God give you an abundance of grain and new wine," which refers to rich harvests.

Isaac's rhetorical question to Esau, "Now as for you then, what can I do, my son?" means that since Isaac unknowingly gave everything to Esau, he now has only an antiblessing to offer Esau, which are prophecies.

Genesis 27:38

"Esau said to his father, 'Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, O my father.' So Esau lifted his voice and wept."

Genesis 27:39-40

"Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, 'Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck.'"

Since Isaac gave everything to Jacob, all he has to give Esau is an "antiblessing," which is a parody on Jacob's blessing and are also prophecies concerning the future of Esau's descendants who were the Edomites.

The antiblessing/prophecy "away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling" means that Esau and his descendants would be denied the earth's fertility unlike Jacob and his descendants.

The antiblessing/prophecy "away from the dew of heaven from above" means that Esau and his descendants, the Edomites, would be denied dew, which plays such an essential role in the irrigation of crops in Palestine.

Therefore, we see that Esau's descendants, the Edomites, would not participate in the blessing of rich harvests as Jacob's descendants, the Israelites would and would live away from fertile places, which implies that his descendants would live in a dry and barren land-as Edom on the whole actually was.

The antiblessing/prophecy "by your sword you shall live" means that Esau's descendants, the Edomites, would live in continuous conflict, always having to defend themselves from their enemies. Edom appears as a militant nation throughout the Old Testament Scriptures (Numbers 20:18; 1 Samuel 14:47; 1 Kings 11:14-16; 2 Kings 14:7-10; Obadiah; Psalm 60:10-11).

The antiblessing/prophecy "your brother you shall serve" means that the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites would prevail over Esau's descendants, the Edomites. Esau, the older, did not actually serve Jacob, his younger twin but rather Esau's descendants did (see 1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 22:47; 2 Kings 14:7). This prophecy is a confirmation of the prophecy that was given to Rebekah and is recorded in Genesis 25:23 that the "older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob)."

The prophecy "But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck" means that the time would come when the Edomites would break free from Israel (See 1 Kings 11:14-15; 2 Kings 8:20-22).

From the time of David, Edom was part of the Israelite empire but later regained its independence (See 2 Kings 8:20-22) but after the fall of Jerusalem, Edom took revenge on Judah (Obadiah; Psalm 137:7). Therefore, we can see that this prophecy of future freedom was in a sense a blessing and thus Esau was blessed as it says in Hebrews 11:20 that Isaac blessed not only Jacob but also Esau.

Hebrews 11:20, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come."

Now, it might appear on the surface that God rewarded Rebekah and Jacob for their sin of deceiving Isaac but this is far from the case. Both Rebekah and Jacob reaped what they sowed. God

disciplined both Rebekah and Jacob for their deception.

For instance, Rebekah and Jacob apparently never saw each other again after the separation that grew out of this deceit, which was a painful experience for both.

Secondly, Jacob was more cruelly deceived by his own sons when they sold Joseph into slavery.

Lastly, Jacob went from being a man of means and influence to being demoted to a position of hard rigorous service for twenty years to Laban.

Genesis 27:41-46 records Rebekah learning of Esau's plot to kill Jacob once Isaac has died and as a result advising Jacob to leave home.

Genesis 27:41

“So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.’”

“Bore a grudge” is the verb *satam* (sf^C*) (saw-tam), which means, “to hate.”

Love and hate are absolutes meaning you either love your fellow human being by obeying the Lord's command to love one another or you hate your fellow human being by disobeying this command. Therefore, when love is absent, hate is present and love unexpressed is not love at all.

Hate is expressed in both an “active” and a “passive” sense. Hate in the “active” sense refers to unjustifiable hostility and antagonism towards one's fellow human being, which expresses itself in malicious words and actions. Hate in the “passive” sense is manifested by coldness, by isolation, by exclusion, unconcern for your fellow believer.

Esau hated his brother Jacob in both an “active” and “passive” sense for stealing the blessing of the birthright.

1 John 2:9-11

“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”

“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”

“But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

The old Adamic sin nature, which was imputed to every human being at the moment of physical birth, is one of the reasons why people hate one another.

Romans 5:19a, “For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners.”

By plotting to kill Jacob when his father died, Esau was being governed by his old Adamic sin nature. The sin nature produces personal sins when we give in to it.

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality.”

“idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions.”

“envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

James rebukes “believers” giving into the lusts of their sin nature, which produced quarrels and conflicts among them.

James 4:1-7

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members?”

“You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.”

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

The second reason why people hate one another is that Satan and his world system can deceive them. By plotting to kill Jacob, Esau was being deceived by the kingdom of darkness.

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

“Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: “He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?”

“But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, ‘GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.’”

“Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

Saul’s hatred of David is an example of the active form of hate that is possible among believers (1 Sam. 18-20). The Lord Jesus Christ was the object of the passive form of hate in that He was deserted by His disciples and friends at the most difficult moment in His life.

What hurt our Lord most was not the active enmity of those who were trying to accomplish His death, but the coldness and indifference of those who once followed Him yet turned aside from Him and idly stood by as He was put to death.

John 16:32, “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

Paul experienced being the object of both the passive and active form of hate from other believers (See 2 Timothy 4:9-18).

The believer who fails to forgive, hates whereas the believer who forgives as God in Christ has forgiven him, loves. By plotting to kill Jacob for stealing the blessing of the inheritance, Esau was not forgiving his brother.

Colossians 3:12-14

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of

compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

“bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

“Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

This attitude of hate led to Esau plotting to murder his brother, which is one of the sins that God hates.

Proverbs 6:16-19

“There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him.”

“Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood.”

“A heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil.”

“A false witness {who} utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

Just as Cain killed his brother Abel in a jealous rage, so Esau plans to kill his brother Jacob because of jealousy.

Proverbs 6:34, “For jealousy enrages a man, and he will not spare in the day of vengeance.”

Like Cain, Esau was an emotional person who was governed by his emotions.

Genesis 27:41

“So Esau bore a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing with which his father had blessed him; and Esau said to himself, ‘The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob.’”

Esau’s statement “the days of mourning for my father are near” indicates that he anticipates that his father will not live much longer but as it turns out, Isaac lived for another eighty years.

His statement “the days of mourning for my father are near, then I will kill my brother Jacob” also indicates that love for his father and fear that his father would curse him and disinherit him constrained him from murdering Jacob immediately.

Genesis 27:42

“Now when the words of her elder son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she sent and called her younger son Jacob, and said to him, ‘Behold your brother Esau is consoling himself concerning you by planning to kill you.’”

Rebekah received this information that Esau was plotting to kill Jacob by divine revelation since Genesis 27:41 records that Esau divulged this plan to no one but in fact was stating this intention to kill Jacob only to himself.

Genesis 27:43

“Now therefore, my son, obey my voice, and arise, flee to Haran, to my brother Laban!”

Just as Rebekah commanded Jacob to deceive his father into giving him the blessing of the birthright so she commands him again to flee from Esau.

The name “Laban” (/b*l*) (Hebrew: *lavan*) means, “white” and is used elsewhere in the Bible (Isa. 24:23; 30:26; cf. Song. 6:10) as a poetic metonym for the moon.

Laban’s grandfather was Nahor, Abraham’s brother, and of course his sister was Rebekah. Laban lived in the city of Nahor near Haran along one of the tributaries of the Euphrates River in what is now modern Syria and his occupation was a sheep and goat herder. Haran still exists in and is located in northern Mesopotamian, a commercial city on the Balikh River, sixty miles from its entrance into the Euphrates. The city was on the busy caravan road connecting with Nineveh, Asshur, and Babylon in Mesopotamia, and with Damascus, Tyre, and Egyptian cities in the west and south and was a center of the moon god cult.

Genesis 27:44-45

“Stay with him a few days, until your brother's fury subsides, until your brother's anger against you subsides and he forgets what you did to him. Then I will send and get you from there. Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?”

Unknown to Rebekah was that she thought she would see Jacob again in just a few days, but she never saw him again. She never thought that Jacob’s exile would be for twenty years as it

turned out to be (See Genesis 31:41). Rebekah not only destroyed her relationship with Esau after conspiring with Jacob to steal the blessing of the birthright but in the end she also lost Jacob.

Genesis 27:46

“Rebekah said to Isaac, ‘I am tired of living because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these, from the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?’”

Just as Sarah took the initiative to provide for Isaac by driving out Hagar and Ishmael (See Genesis 21:10) so Rebekah acts for Jacob by providing for his get away with a cover of legitimacy.

Rebekah’s desire to get a wife for Jacob among her relatives was not her real motivation for sending Jacob to her relatives. But rather, it was to spare Jacob from Esau’s wrath. Rebekah uses Esau’s Hittite wives as a pretext for sending Jacob away to her relatives.

Esau’s Hittite wives brought grief not only to Rebekah but also Isaac according to Genesis 26:34-35. Therefore, by appealing to Isaac’s dislike for Esau’s Hittite wives, Rebekah knows that Isaac will consent to her sending Jacob away to her relatives in Paddan Aram.

The Hittites were the descendants of Heth who was the son of Canaan (See Genesis 10:15) and as a result were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah, which is recorded in Genesis 9:24-27. At times the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called “Canaanites” but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called “Canaanite” (Nm. 13:29).

Against the will of the Lord, Esau married Hittite women, who were Canaanites according to Genesis 26:34-35. Therefore, Rebekah had a legitimate reason for sending Jacob away.

The Aramean women embrace the faith of their husbands, unlike the Canaanite women who seduce their husbands to join their lifestyles (See Genesis 24:4; 26:34-35; 31:50).

Again, we see Rebekah manipulating her husband and whining at him, which manifests how bad

Rebekah and Isaac's relationship had gotten. As a wife to Isaac, Rebekah is not conducting herself according to the Word of God.

Colossians 3:18, "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

Rebekah has become a contentious woman as a result of her disobedience. She states to Isaac that she won't be fit to live with if Jacob marries a Canaanite like his brother.

Proverbs 19:13, "And the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping."

Proverbs 21:9, "It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman."

Proverbs 21:19, "It is better to live in a desert land than with a contentious and vexing woman."

Proverbs 25:24, "It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman."

Proverbs 27:15, 16

"A constant dripping on a day of steady rain and a contentious woman are alike."

"He who would restrain her restrains the wind, and grasps oil with his right hand."

Rebekah is lying about her true motivation for sending Jacob to her relatives, indicating that her and Isaac were not communicating on important spiritual matters.

Also, Rebekah is pouring salt on the open wound of Isaac who knew full well that Esau disobeyed the Lord and betrayed the Abrahamic Covenant by marrying Hittite women rather than an Aramean woman.

Genesis 28

In Genesis 28:1-5, we have the record of Isaac blessing Jacob and agreeing with Rebekah's idea to send Jacob away to her relatives and warning him not to take a wife among the Canaanites but from Rebekah's relatives.

Now, the idea of sending Jacob to Paddan Aram and "out of the land of Canaan" would put Jacob out of the "geographical" will of God, which

means that there is a specific geographical place that God has ordained for the believer to serve Him. Therefore, we can see that Rebekah's plan is against the will of the Lord and Isaac agrees to it and shouldn't have.

Esau's plot to kill Jacob shouldn't have prompted his being sent out of the land of Canaan but rather if she was concerned about his safety, she simply should have sent him away to some other place in the land of Canaan.

Isaac should have done what his father Abraham had done and sent a trusted servant to secure a bride among Rebekah's relatives. Remember, Isaac never left the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. However, Abraham left the land of Canaan by taking a trip to Egypt where he and Sarah were delivered from the hands of Pharaoh (See Genesis 12). We are going to see Jacob getting into trouble with Laban in Paddan Aram, which he would never have gotten into if he stayed in the land of Canaan.

Now, even though, Rebekah and Isaac failed in this area and put their son Jacob out of the will of God, God was still able to use the situation with Laban to build the character of Jacob. Therefore, we see that the "directive" will of God was for Jacob and all the patriarchs to stay in the land of Canaan but His "permissive" will, permitted Jacob to leave the land in order to teach him spiritual lessons and build his character.

Now, Rebekah's plan to have Jacob marry one of his cousins seems shocking to us in the 21st century but in those days, it happened all the time and was not yet prohibited by God! As we have noted in our previous studies in the book of Genesis, since God created only one man and one woman, it was essential for brothers to marry sisters in order to continue the human race.

In the first generations, all marriages were brother and sister marriages and there were no mutant genes in the genetic systems of any of these children so that no genetic harm could have resulted from close marriages. Many, many generations later, during the time of Moses, such mutations had accumulated to the point where such unions were genetically dangerous so that incest was thenceforth prohibited in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:6-18). Since earth's population was

still relatively young in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, there was as yet no genetic danger from inbreeding. After many further centuries had elapsed, however, the accumulation of mutations and the associated danger of congenital defects had become sufficiently serious to cause God to declare incestuous marriages illegal (Lev. 18:6-14).

Genesis 28:1

“So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him, and said to him, ‘You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.’”

Isaac agrees to Rebekah’s plan to send Jacob to marry one of his cousins but does not know that her real reason for sending Jacob away was to avoid Esau’s plot to kill Jacob once Isaac had died. So Rebekah uses her and Isaac’s dislike of Esau’s Hittite wives as a pretext for sending Jacob away to her relatives to secure a bride.

Notice how she manipulates Isaac using a persuasive argument to get Isaac to do what she wants. She doesn’t relate to Isaac, Esau’s plot to kill Jacob since she knew that Isaac would have not believed that his favorite son would do such a thing.

Rebekah let it be known how distressed she was over the Canaanite women whom Esau had taken as wives (cf. 26:34-35) and then she insinuated that if Jacob did the same she would not be fit to live with. No wonder Isaac agreed to Rebekah’s plan since what man wants to live with a bitchy wife!

Proverbs 21:9, “It is better to live in a corner of a roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

Isaac “blessed” Jacob in the sense that he publicly honored and acknowledged and recognized that Jacob is the true heir of the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant. This act on the part of Isaac also demonstrates that he is recovered from his folly in attempting to bless Esau against the will of the Lord.

Genesis 28:2

“Arise, go to Paddan-aram, to the house of Bethuel your mother's father; and from there

take to yourself a wife from the daughters of Laban your mother's brother.”

“Paddan Aram” (/D^P^m! sR*a&) is another name for “Aram Naharaim,” and is synonymous with the name “Mesopotamia,” and refers to the city of Nahor where Abraham’s brother founded a city and named it after himself and was the place that Abraham’s servant found Rebekah, Isaac’s wife.

The prohibition to not marry a Canaanite woman and the command to marry a cousin corresponds to the prohibition and command recorded in Genesis 24:2-4 that Abraham gave his servant Eliezer regarding a bride for Isaac. The family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was prohibited by God from entering into marriage with the Canaanites and instead were to marry Shemites since Noah prophesied in Genesis 9:20-27 that Canaan was under a curse and that Shem was in the line of Christ.

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were Shemites meaning that they were descendants of Shem and were therefore to marry other Shemites. Rebekah’s family were Shemites and therefore, Jacob is sent away to marry one of his cousins.

Neither Jacob nor Esau had ever previously been taught by their parents that marriage to Canaanite women was against the will of God and unsatisfactory to their parents. We know this to be the case since Isaac’s prohibition to Jacob to not marry a Canaanite was never in the past given to either Jacob or Esau since nowhere previously has this instruction been given. This is further confirmed by Esau’s response to learning that his Canaanite wives were displeasing to his father when he went and married an Ishmaelite, which is recorded in Genesis 28:6-9. Therefore, it appears that Isaac and Rebekah failed as parents in the eyes of the Lord since they did not teach Jacob and Esau Noah’s prophecy recorded in Genesis 9:24-27.

The Word of God teaches that Christian parents are responsible for bringing up their children in the ways of the Lord (See Deuteronomy 6:1-7).

Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."

2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."

Your child's knowledge of the Lord should be received primarily in the home from the parents and not in public school or even Sunday school.

Genesis 28:3

"May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples."

The expression "God Almighty" (Hebrew: *El Shaddai*) was first used by God of Himself when speaking to Abraham, recorded in Genesis 17:1.

Genesis 17:1, "Now when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; Walk before Me, and be blameless.'"

The title *El Shaddai*, "God Almighty" emphasizes the omnipotence of God and describes the Lord as being able to make Jacob's descendants numerous. The title *El Shaddai*, "God Almighty" also signifies that the blessing contained in Genesis 28:3-5 recalls the covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis 17:1-8.

"Bless" is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means, "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc."

Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates Isaac's desire for Jacob that he would be endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity."

Like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, the Lord would bless Jacob in the sense that the Lord would multiply his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually and multiply his possessions and livestock and prosper him financially.

Isaac's desire for Jacob that the Lord would make Jacob "fruitful" means that the Lord would give Jacob the capacity to be prolific in that he would be the progenitor of a multitude of children in both a biological and spiritual sense.

Isaac's desire for Jacob that the Lord would make him fruitful and multiply him refers to the Lord enduing Jacob and his descendants with the ability to be prolific in terms of posterity.

The expression "a company of peoples" refers to a community of nations that will originate from Jacob and echoes the Lord's promise to his grandfather Abraham that he would become "the father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:4-5) and "the father of nations" (Genesis 17:6).

The Lord's promise to Abraham to make him "the father of a multitude of nations" and Isaac's desire that the Lord would make Jacob a "company of peoples" would be fulfilled in a two-fold sense: (1) Biological (2) Spiritual.

The promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled in a "biological" sense through: (1) Hagar where he is the progenitor of the Ishmaelites (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18) (2) Through Keturah, the Midianites and others (Gen. 25:1-4) (3) Through Isaac and Rebekah, the Edomites (Gen. 25:23; 36:1-43). This is all substantiated by the genealogies of Keturah (Gen. 25:1-4), Ishmael (Gen. 25:12-18) and Edom (Gen. 36).

In a "biological" or "racial" sense, the company of peoples that would originate from Jacob was the nation of Israel and in a "spiritual" sense the company of peoples would be all those who exercise faith alone in Christ alone who would be composed of all nations and races, both male and female, slave and freeman.

The Lord's promise to make Abraham a father or progenitor of many nations was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a "spiritual" sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). This is how the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him "all the families of the earth would be blessed" would be accomplished.

In the same way, that Abraham became a father in a "spiritual" sense to those individuals who exercised faith in Christ so also Jacob would become the father in a "spiritual" sense to all those who exercised faith in Christ.

Genesis 28:4

“May He also give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and to your descendants with you that you may possess the land of your sojournings, which God gave to Abraham.”

By making this statement, Isaac is agreeing with the Lord that Jacob is the rightful heir and will inherit the privileges, responsibilities, promises and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant.

“The blessing of Abraham” refers to the fact that Jacob would inherit the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the covenant that the Lord established with Abraham, which are recorded Genesis 12:2-3, 7; 13:14-17; 15:1-6, 18; 17:1-8; 22:15-18; 24:7.

The “Abrahamic” covenant included not only “personal” (Isaac and land of Canaan) and “national” (Israel) promises to Abraham but also contained the “universal” promise of eternal salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah.

“The blessing of Abraham” also means that Jacob would be in the line of Christ, the Promised Seed.

The possession of the land refers to the “Palestinian” Covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18). The “Palestinian” Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan. The boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18).

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abram’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16;

Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Genesis 28:5

“Then Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Paddan-aram to Laban, son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.”

The journey to be taken by Jacob to Paddan Aram would be the same one taken by Eliezer to secure a bride for Isaac and would be approximately a seven hundred mile journey. Jacob’s name is listed first followed by Esau to demonstrate that both Isaac and Rebekah are now unified in their recognition that Jacob will receive the blessings of the birthright and the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant and not Esau. Esau’s name is listed in order to establish a smooth transition with the information about Esau recorded in Genesis 28:6-9.

Genesis 28:6-9 records Esau marrying an Ishmaelite in order to please his father after discovering that his Hittite wives displeased him.

Genesis 28:6-7

“Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Paddan-aram to take to himself a wife from there, and that when he blessed him he charged him, saying, ‘You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan, and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Paddan-aram.’”

The prohibition to not marry a Canaanite woman and the command to marry a cousin corresponds to the prohibition and command recorded in Genesis 24:2-4 that Abraham gave his servant Eliezer regarding a bride for Isaac.

The family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was prohibited by God from entering into marriage with the Canaanites and instead were to marry Shemites since Noah prophesied in Genesis 9:20-27 that Canaan was under a curse and that Shem was in the line of Christ. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were Shemites meaning that they were descendants of Shem and were therefore to marry other Shemites. Rebekah’s family were Shemites

and therefore, Jacob is sent away to marry one of his cousins.

Neither Jacob nor Esau had ever previously been taught by their parents that marriage to Canaanite women was against the will of God and unsatisfactory to their parents. We know this to be the case since Isaac's prohibition to Jacob to not marry a Canaanite was never in the past given to either Jacob or Esau since nowhere previously has this instruction been given. This is further confirmed by Esau's response to learning that his Canaanite wives were displeasing to his father when he went and married an Ishmaelite, which is recorded in Genesis 28:6-9. Therefore, it appears that Isaac and Rebekah failed as parents in the eyes of the Lord since they did not teach Jacob and Esau Noah's prophecy recorded in Genesis 9:24-27.

Genesis 28:8-9

“So Esau saw that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father Isaac; and Esau went to Ishmael, and married, besides the wives that he had, Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.”

When Esau learned of Jacob's departure, he then finally realized how displeasing his Hittite-Canaanite wives were to Isaac. Evidently, he did not know how his wives acted when he wasn't around. So he did not understand that the real problem that their Canaanite lifestyle caused. He thought it was because they were not relatives. So when Jacob was sent to get a wife from Rebekah's relatives, Esau jumped to the conclusion that he could please his father by marrying a relative and somehow receive a blessing from him.

Esau never did understand the spiritual issues involved since he was soulish man and uninterested in the things of the Lord as manifested in his exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup. The fact that Esau was a naturally minded or soulish man and not a spiritual man is the reason why he never understood spiritual issues.

1 Corinthians 2:14, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot

understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

So Esau goes to his relatives, the home of Ishmael and takes a wife from among them. But again he has no spiritual perception and doesn't realize that Ishmael was not in the line of Christ either and that the Lord had chosen Isaac over him as Abraham's heir. In fact, Psalm 83:6 records an alliance of Edomites with the Ishmaelites against Israel!

Genesis 28:6-9 also reveals how desperately Esau desired to please his father but he lacks spiritual understanding to connect with Isaac and Rebekah.

“Ishmael” was the son that Sarah's Egyptian maid Hagar bore to Abraham and his name means, “God hears” which alludes to the fact that God heard or took notice of Hagar's suffering when she was sent out of the home by Abraham and Sarah while pregnant with Ishmael (See Genesis 16).

“Ishmael” became the progenitor of the Arabs, who have traditionally been the enemies of Israel and also from the line of “Ishmael” came Muhammad and Islam, one of the most demonic of religions and a foe of not only Israel but also Christianity.

Genesis 25:12-18 records that Ishmael was the progenitor of twelve tribes who settled in the region from Havilah to Shur in the Arabian Desert and were hostile to their neighbors.

“Havilah” was located in the region East of Egypt in northwest Arabia (see 1 Samuel 15:7) whereas “Shur” was a city on the borders of Egypt and Palestine and a comparison of Genesis 20:1, 25:18, 1 Samuel 15:7 and 27:8 indicates that it clearly lies near the northern border of Egypt in the Sinai peninsula in the modern Suez region.

The fact that twelve princes originated from Ishmael is a fulfillment of the Lord's prophecy to Abraham that is recorded in Genesis 17:20.

Genesis 17:20, “As for Ishmael, I have heard you; behold, I will bless him, and will make him fruitful and will multiply him exceedingly. He shall become the father of twelve princes, and I will make him a great nation.”

Like Abraham, Ishmael was a believer since Genesis 25:17 records that he was “gathered to his

people,” which is always used with reference to believers (Abraham in Genesis 25:8; Isaac in Genesis 35:29; Jacob in Genesis 49:33; Aaron in Numbers 20:24, 26; Deuteronomy 35:20).

The daughter of Ishmael that Esau married was “Mahalath” (tl^t&m*) (Hebrew: *Machalath* pronounced makh-al-ath), whose name means, “stringed instrument.”

The brother “Mahalath” was “Nebaioth” (ty)b*n+) (Hebrew: *n^evayoth* pronounced neb-aw-yoth) whose name means, “heights” and whose descendants were the “Nabayati” an Arab tribe that was conquered by Ashurbanipal in the seventh century (668-633 B.C.) and are mentioned in Isaiah 60:7.

Genesis 28:10-13 records Jacob’s departure from Beersheba. In this passage we see Jacob receiving direct revelation from the preincarnate Christ who reconfirms to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and reassures him of His presence and protection while in exile in Paddan Aram. Thus far in our study of this chapter, we have seen in Genesis 28:1-5 that Isaac agrees with Rebekah’s plan to send Jacob away to her brother Laban in Paddan Aram in order to secure a wife for Jacob.

Her real reason for sending Jacob away was to protect him from Esau’s plot to kill him and not really to secure a bride for Isaac. This is clear since Rebekah did not provide Jacob with money and materials to give to Laban her brother, which would constitute the “price” to secure a bride.

Evidently, Isaac assumed that Rebekah would see to it that she would provide Jacob everything he would need to secure a bride since Jacob was her favorite. His assumption proved wrong and costly since Rebekah never sees Jacob again.

Rebekah’s conspiracy to deceive her husband Isaac so that he would bless Jacob her favorite rather than Esau his favorite son would come back to haunt her. By not seeing Jacob again she has reaped what she has sowed.

Genesis 28:10

“Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran.”

The journey from Beersheba to Haran was approximately a seven hundred mile journey and

was the same one taken by Abraham’s servant Eliezer when he went to secure a bride for Isaac among Abraham’s relatives.

Genesis 28:11

“He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.”

What a difference a day makes. Not too long ago we saw Jacob living under the comfort and protection of his parents’ tents but now we see that this has been replaced by a rock.

Up to this point in his life, Jacob had spent most of his life as a homebody, living in the family home at Beersheba (Genesis 22:19; 26:33; 28:10). Now, Jacob would have to grow up in a hurry since he is about to enter the school of hard knocks but at the same time will grow closer in his relationship to God.

Back in Beersheba, Esau waits to kill him and ahead of him in Haran, and unknown to Jacob, Laban waits to exploit him. Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this passage, writes, “He is situated between a death camp and a hard-labor camp” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 388, Zondervan).

Jacob is retracing the long and difficult journey that Abraham traveled approximately one hundred twenty-five years earlier. However, his situation was much more difficult than that of his grandfather because back in Beersheba, Esau waits to kill him and ahead of him in Haran is Laban waiting to cheat him.

The “certain place” in which Jacob camped and spent the night was “Bethel,” which used to be called “Luz” according to Genesis 28:19. “Bethel” literally means, “house of God” and is identified with modern Beiten, approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem, which became one of the two capitals and cult centers of the northern kingdom and only Jerusalem is mentioned in the Old Testament more than Bethel.

If you recall, it was near Bethel that Abraham built an altar and worshipped the Lord in prayer just before and after his ill advised trip to Egypt with Sarah (See Genesis 12:8; 13:3, 4). Bethel would be

the place that Jacob would later return to from his exile according to Genesis 35:1. It would become to him a lifelong memorial of God's promises to him and of His ability to fulfill those promises.

The trip from Beersheba to Bethel was approximately a sixty to seventy mile journey north and was very difficult and arduous journey since it was over rough, mountainous country.

In the Scriptures, sunset symbolizes distress and adversity (See Genesis 15:12, 17; 19:1) whereas sunrise symbolizes deliverance from God. The setting sun symbolizes the beginning of Jacob's dark journey to Paddan Aram where he will struggle with humans and with God but will prevail whereas the "day-break" for his soul will not come until the end of his twenty-year exile (See Genesis 32:26).

The terrain in Bethel is limestone and so there were plenty of stones to choose from. Jacob decided to use one of these stones as a pillow to rest his head. He was no doubt feeling alone and forsaken and was feeling anxious about his future. The fact that Jacob was by himself sleeping out in the open air using a rock for a pillow indicates that he was alone with no caravan for protection and did not even have a tent under which he could rest.

At this point in his life, Jacob typifies or foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who according to Matthew 8:20, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

There were no armed servants to protect him against beasts or bandits and he was not a hunter like Esau, which would have enabled him to live off the land. No doubt, his mother packed food and supplies for him along with money to purchase necessities along the way but otherwise from the human perspective and his at the time, he is alone in a strange and dangerous country. But as he will soon find out, he is not alone since God is with him and elect angels are protecting the father of the nation of Israel.

Genesis 28:12

"He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

In Genesis 28:12-13, the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), "behold, look" is used after the verb of perception *chalam* (sl^j*) (khaw-lam), "to dream" and marks out three images in Jacob's dream: (1) A stairway touching heaven and earth (2) Angels ascending and descending on the ladder (3) The Lord as Master.

"Ladder" is the noun *sullam* (sl*s|) (soo-lawm), which does "not" refer to a ladder but rather to a broad and high flight of stairs since the latter would be better suited for angels ascending to and descending from the third heaven.

There were many angels on the staircase with some ascending and others descending at the same time and so what Jacob sees is a "stairway to heaven."

"Angel" is the noun *mal'akh* (Ea*|+m^) (mal-awk), which means, "messenger" is used in the Old Testament with reference to "elect" angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the "preincarnate" Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1). The context indicates that *mal'akh* in Genesis 28:12 is a reference to elect angels.

The fact that these angels are ascending to and descending from the throne room of God indicates that these angels had uninterrupted, continuous communication with God. The angels were first of all said to be ascending to God meaning they were coming to God from protecting Jacob. Then, the passage says that they were descending from the throne room of God to Jacob in order to protect him. Therefore, unknown to Jacob was that these elect angels had been with Jacob all the time on this trip.

Also, the fact that these angels were protecting Jacob indicates they were of course "elect" angels. We have seen in our past studies in the book of Genesis that the elect angels are employed by God to guard (Genesis 3:24), to communicate with God's people (Genesis 18:1) and to protect God's people (Genesis 19:1-22).

Hebrews 1:14, "Are not all angels servant-spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation."

Therefore, the presence of these elect angels would suggest to Jacob that the preincarnate Christ

who appeared to him in this dream at Bethel would also be present with him through these elect angels. This revelation would be a great encouragement to Jacob as he made his way into exile.

Also, the Lord wanted Jacob to know that even though he had to flee his home, he was not leaving the God of Abraham and his father Isaac behind. This vision of angels would reassure Jacob that God cares for him and was also still accessible to him even though he had left his parents.

The Lord Jesus uses this incident with Jacob in John 1:51 as an illustration of the fact that the believer has access to the Father through Him (See John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

John 1:51, "And He said to him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.'"

Therefore, the Lord Jesus is telling Nathaniel that He is the high and broad staircase that extends from earth to heaven, which implies that He is the "Mediator" between heaven and earth or in other words, between God and man.

1 Timothy 2:5, "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Genesis 28:13

"And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.'"

As Jacob laid his head to rest on the stones of Bethel, the Lord appeared to him in a "theophany," or "Christophany," which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). This theophany or Christophany was in the form of a dream, which was one of the means by which the Lord appeared to His people prior to His 1st Advent.

Hebrews 1:1-2, "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions

and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world."

The Lord identifies Himself to Jacob as "the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac" in order to reassure Jacob that he will be protected by Him.

In Genesis 28:14-15, we will see Jacob receiving from the Lord reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and reassurance that the Lord would protect and prosper him in exile in Paddan Aram.

Genesis 28:14

"Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

The promises to Jacob that are recorded in Genesis 28:14 echo the promises given to his father Isaac, which are recorded in Genesis 26:4. They also echo the blessing that his father Isaac pronounced upon him before he left home, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3-4.

The Lord's promises to both Jacob and Isaac and the blessing of his father bestowed upon him before he left home were a "reconfirmation" of the promises made to Abraham that are recorded in Genesis 12:2-3, 7, 13:14-18, 15:1-6, 18, 17:1-8 and 22:17.

In Genesis 26:3-4, Isaac received reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant by means of a theophany. In Genesis 26:23-25, the Lord appeared in a theophany to Isaac at Beersheba and gave him reassurance by reconfirming to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. In Genesis 28:3-4, the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon Jacob before he left home echoes the promises of the Abrahamic covenant. In Genesis 28:14-15, God's reiteration of the promises to Abraham and Isaac assures Jacob of God's faithfulness.

The Lord is reassuring Jacob in his time of adversity that like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, that he would receive divine

protection and would be prospered by the Lord. The Lord's reiteration to Jacob of the promises He made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac would reassure Jacob that the very God who protected his grandfather and father and prospered them would do so for him. The Lord's reiteration to Jacob of the promises He made to his grandfather and father would confirm to Jacob that he was in the Messianic line. So these promises to Jacob would reassure him that the God of his grandfather Abraham and that of his father Isaac would not abandon him.

"Your descendants" refers to Isaac's "biological" descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his "spiritual" descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In a "near" sense "Your descendants" refers the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a "far" sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

The comparative clause "like the dust of the earth" echoes the Lord's promises to Abraham in Genesis 13:10 to multiply his descendants "as the dust of the earth" and "as the sand on the seashore" in Genesis 22:17 as well as the promise to Isaac in Genesis 26:4 to multiply his descendants "as the dust of the earth."

The comparative clause "like the dust of the earth" drives the point home to Jacob regarding the Lord's promise to greatly multiply his descendants and would indicate quite clearly to him that the Lord has a plan for his life and would give him assurance during his time of adversity!

The prophecy that Jacob's descendants would be as the dust of the earth in a "near" sense was fulfilled in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob receives these promises of numerous descendants while he was childless. In fact, at this time, he wasn't even married!

The Lord's promise to Isaac that he "will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south" echoes the Lord's promise to his grandfather Abraham that is recorded in Genesis

13:14-15 and pertains to the "Palestinian Covenant.

The Lord's promise to Jacob that he and his descendants would spread over the land of Canaan would reassure him that he would be returning to Canaan. The Lord is promising Jacob that He would bring him back to Canaan even though he is fleeing from it at this particular time.

"Spread out" is the verb *parats* (Jr^P*) (paw-rats), which is a military term meaning "to break out" and implies that the descendants of Jacob who would be the nation of Israel would through military conquest take possession of the land of Canaan.

This military conquest of the land of Canaan was accomplished to a certain extent in Israel's history under Joshua. But it will find its ultimate fulfillment when the Lord Jesus Christ at His 2nd Advent who at that time will destroy anti-Christ, the false prophet, and the Gentile armies surrounding Israel during the Tribulation period (aka Daniel's 70th week) and will establish His millennial reign.

The Lord's promise to Jacob that in him, "all the families of the earth be blessed" is a "universal" promise and indicates that Jacob would be in the Messianic line meaning that the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature would descend from him.

The promise "in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed" should be translated "in your Seed or Descendant all the families of the earth shall be blessed" since the word for "descendants" in the Hebrew text is in the singular making the promise Messianic. This promise is a "reconfirmation" of the "universal" promise the Lord made to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 22:18.

The Lord statement in Genesis 22:18 that "in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed" and the promise to Jacob in Genesis 28:14 that "in Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed" echoes the Lord's promise in Genesis 18:18. It is an enlargement upon the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in Abraham "all the families of the earth will be blessed."

Galatians 3:8-16 reveals that the promises in Genesis 18:18, “in (Abraham) all the nations of the earth will be blessed,” Genesis 22:18, “in your seed (Christ) all the nations of the earth will be blessed,” Genesis 26:4, “by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,” Genesis 28:14, “in Your Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed” refers to the Lord Jesus Christ who would bring salvation to the Gentile nations through faith in Him.

Galatians 3:8-16

“The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, ‘ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.’”

“So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”

“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.’”

“Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, ‘THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.’”

“However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, ‘HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.’”

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us -- for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.’”

“in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

“Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.”

“Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as referring to many, but rather to one, ‘And to your seed,’ that is, Christ.”

Genesis 28:15 records the “personal” promises that the Lord made to Jacob.

Genesis 28:15

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

The Lord’s promise to Jacob that “I am with you” echoes the promise the Lord made to his father Isaac “I will be with you” recorded in Genesis 26:3 and is a guarantee to Jacob of the Lord’s presence in his life.

The Lord’s promise “I will keep you wherever you go” guarantees Jacob divine protection while he is abroad.

These guarantees of the divine presence and protection would encourage Jacob and calm his fears while being exploited by his uncle Laban and while hiding from his brother Esau who was seeking to kill him.

The Lord’s promise “I will bring you back to this land” is the Lord’s guarantee of a “homecoming” to Jacob in that He will bring Jacob back to the land of Canaan.

The Lord’s promise that “I will never leave you” guarantees Jacob that the Lord would be present with him and would protect and preserve him while he lived abroad with his uncle Laban.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.’”

“so that we confidently say, ‘THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?’”

The Lord’s promise “for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” does “not” mean that God’s protection of Jacob will end some day but rather that the Lord’s presence and protection will outlast Jacob’s exile in Paddan Aram since the promises given to Jacob are eternal in nature.

All the promises that the Lord made to Jacob that are recorded in Genesis 28:13-15 reassured Jacob that the Lord had a plan for his life.

In Genesis 28:16-17, we have Jacob's first response to the dream, which was to worship the Lord with his lips.

Genesis 28:16

“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.’”

The fact that the Lord “appeared” to Jacob is a “theophany,” or “Christophany, which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

“Lord” is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God indicating that Jacob had a covenant relationship with God. The term “Lord” also emphasizes the “immanency” of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Jacob and would bless him in fulfillment of His promises to him.

Just a few hours before, Jacob was feeling alone and abandoned and isolated and forsaken but with this theophany and divine promises, he is now aware that he was never alone and that the God of his grandfather and father was present with him.

According to Genesis 28:19 “this place” was called “Luz” but was renamed by Jacob to “Bethel” according to Genesis 28:19. “Bethel” literally means, “house of God” and is identified with modern Beiten, approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem, which became one of the two capitals and cult centers of the northern kingdom and only Jerusalem is mentioned in the Old Testament more than Bethel.

If you recall, it was near Bethel that Abraham built an altar and worshipped the Lord in prayer just before and after his ill advised trip to Egypt with Sarah (See Genesis 12:8; 13:3, 4). Bethel would be the place that Jacob would later return to from his exile according to Genesis 35:1. It would become to him a lifelong memorial of God's promises to him and of His ability to fulfill those promises.

Genesis 28:17

“He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’”

The Hebrew term translated “fear” and “awesome” is the verb *yare* (ar@y*) (yaw-ray), which denotes the concept of worshipping God and does “not” refer to being afraid as a result of a threat to one's life but rather it means, “to have reverence and respect” for the Lord and to be in “awe” of Him and expresses Jacob's “wonder” towards Him. Therefore, we see that Jacob is responding to the theophany and divine promises by having “reverence” and “respect” for God and is in “awe” of Him and is expressing his “wonder” towards Him.

These four English words, “reverence,” “respect,” “awe,” and “wonder” convey the idea behind the verb *yare* in Genesis 28:17 and also express the concept of worshipping the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “reverence”: “A feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration.”

Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to possess an attitude of deep respect and awe for the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “respect”: “esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or trait, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or trait.”

Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to esteem the excellence of the Person of God as manifested through His personal qualities or attributes such as love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, justice, righteousness, truth, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “awe”: “an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, fear, etc. produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful or the like.”

Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was to possess an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration for the Lord, which was produced by the vision of angels and theophany and divine promises in his dream.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "wonder": "to be filled with admiration, amazement or awe; marvel."

Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises was one of being filled with admiration, amazement and awe.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "True wonder reaches right into your heart and mind and shakes you up. It not only has depth, it has value; it enriches your life. Wonder is not cheap amusement that brings a smile to your face. It is an encounter with reality, with God, which brings awe to your heart. You're overwhelmed with an emotion that is a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear-and love. You're not looking for explanations; you're lost in the wonder of God" (Real Worship, page 43, Baker Books).

Therefore, paraphrasing this comment by Wiersbe on wonder we would say that Jacob's response to the theophany and divine promises reached right into his heart and shook him up and enriched his life. Jacob's encounter with the Lord brought awe to his heart and overwhelmed him with an emotion that was a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear and love for the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. Jacob wasn't looking for explanations since he was lost in the wonder of God.

Therefore, the phrase "He (Jacob) was afraid" and Jacob's statement "How awesome is this place" expresses the fact that Jacob is worshipping God in the sense that he is manifesting an attitude of deep reverence, respect and awe of the Lord for revealing Himself in the dream and giving him reassurance.

Psalm 68:35, "O God, You are awesome from Your sanctuary. The God of Israel Himself gives strength and power to the people. Blessed be God!"

Psalm 128:1, "How blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in His ways."

Hebrews 12:28-29, "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire."

Therefore, Jacob's statement "How awesome is this place" indicates that he is worshipping the Lord. Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures and is also the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship, "Worship is the believer's response of all that they are –mind, emotions, will and body-to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience and its practical side in objective obedience to God's revealed will. Worship is a loving response that's balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better" (Real Worship, 26).

If we paraphrase Wiersbe's definition, we could say the following: Jacob is worshipping the Lord in that he is responding in his mind (his thoughts), emotions (excitement), and body (rising early and setting up a pillar to memorialize the theophany) to what God is (omnipotent and sovereign and faithful) and did in revealing Himself to Jacob by means of a theophany and what the Lord said in His promises to Jacob.

Psalm 95:6-7, "Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand."

Genesis 28:17

"He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.'"

The expression "house of God" anticipates the name Jacob is about to give to the place, which according to Genesis 28:19 is "Bethel." The expression "the gate of heaven" appears only once in the Bible, here in Genesis 28:17. "The house of God" refers to the abode of God, which is located

in the third heaven and “the gate of heaven” is the place where Jacob entered heaven in his dream.

The original languages of Scripture teach that there are three levels of heaven: (1) 1st heaven: Earth’s atmosphere. (2) 2nd heaven: Stellar universe. (3) 3rd heaven: Abode of God, the angels and the dead believers.

This multiplicity of heavens is indicated in Hebrews 4:14 where our Lord at His ascension is said to have “passed through the heavens” (accusative masculine plural noun *ouranos*). The 1st and 2nd heaven are not specifically mentioned but the 3rd heaven is.

2 Corinthians 12:2, “I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”

Logically speaking, it is evident that there cannot be a 3rd heaven without also a 1st and 2nd heaven.

Although it is true that the Scriptures teach that “the heaven of heavens cannot contain God” (1 Kings 8:27) and that God is omnipresent in the universe, nevertheless, they clearly affirm that the third heaven is in a particular way the abode of the Trinity (Gen. 14:19, 22; 23:3, 7; 1 Kings 8:30, 49; 2 Chron. 6:21, 30; Neh. 1:4-5; 2:4, 20; Psa. 11:4; 20:6; 33:14; 103:19; Isa. 63:5; 66:1; Matt. 5:34; Luke 16:9; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 7:56; 2 Cor. 12:2; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 19:14).

The present 3rd heaven is also the abode of the elect angels as well as all believers throughout human history in every dispensation and is the present location of the appeal trial of Satan and all the fallen angels before the Supreme Court of heaven.

The Lord Jesus Christ during His 1st Advent repeatedly stated that He came from heaven (John 3:13, 27, 31; 6:38, 41-42, 50-51, 58) and is in heaven now seated at the right hand of God (Psa. 110:1; Acts 2:33; Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 1 Pet. 3:22).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of the three levels of heaven.

Genesis 1:1, “In eternity past, God created out of nothing the heavens and the earth.”

Paul states that “inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak” are heard in heaven (2 Cor. 12:1-4).

Heaven is the place where Paul says “eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not entered into the heart of man, all that God has prepared for those who love Him” (1 Cor. 2:9).

Heaven is a place of beauty (Rev. 21:1-22:7) and is a place of eternal life (1 Tim. 4:8). Both the present heaven and the new heaven are a place of service to God (Rev. 22:3). Heaven is a place of worship (Rev. 19:1-3) and is a place of glory (2 Cor. 4:17-18).

The New Jerusalem is located in heaven (Rev. 21:2) and the temple of God is also located in heaven along with the tabernacle (2 Sam. 22:7; Isa. 6:1; Heb. 8) and of course, God the Father’s house is located in the third heaven (John 14:1-2).

Our Lord Jesus Christ as part of His High Priestly prayer promised His Bride, the Church, a dwelling place in heaven (John 14:1-3) since Her true home and citizenship is not on planet earth but in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

The resurrection bodies of believers are located in heaven (2 Cor. 5:1-2) as well as their eternal inheritance (Eph. 1:3).

The third heaven is the place where the resurrected Christ conducts the government of the kingdom of God as the ruler of all creation (Psa. 110:1-2; Matt. 22:44; 26:64; Mark 12:36; 14:62; 16:19; Luke 20:42; 22:69; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 3:20-22; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; Rev. 4-5).

Heaven is served by innumerable angels, their hosts and families and is the sphere of their existence (Matt. 18:10; Mark 12:25; 13:32; Eph. 3:15), coming from heaven and returning to it either individually (Matt. 28:2; Luke 22:43), or in hosts (Luke 2:15).

Also, Satan and the fallen angels still have access to heaven because of their appeal trial (Job 1; Zech. 3; Rev. 12:7-9).

Old Testament saints are now located in the 3rd heaven with the Lord Jesus Christ as a result of His trip to a compartment of Hades called Paradise (Luke 23:43; Eph. 4:8-10).

The Lord Jesus Christ will create a new heavens and a new earth for the eternal state, which immediately follows the Great White Throne Judgment at the conclusion of the appeal trial, which is the conclusion of human history itself (See Revelation 20:11-21).

In fact, Hebrews 1:10-11 quoting Psalm 102:25-27 states that the present heaven and earth “will perish...will become old as a garment” and “as a mantle” the Lord Jesus Christ “will roll them up...as a garment they (the present heavens and earth) will be changed.”

The new heaven and new earth will be the real place of perfect happiness, peace and righteousness because no form of evil and unrighteousness will be allowed into it (2 Pet. 3:10-13; Rev. 21:1-8). The presence of evil in the universe as a result of Satan and the fallen angels rebellion resulting in the appeal trial require that the Lord Jesus Christ create a new heavens and a new earth.

Genesis 28:18-19 records Jacob’s second, third and fourth responses to the dream. His second response was to construct a pillar to memorialize his encounter with the preincarnate Christ.

Also, in this passage, we see Jacob’s third response, which was to worship the Lord by pouring oil on top of the pillar, which expressed his dedication, devotion, consecration and gratitude towards the Lord. His fourth response is also contained in this passage, which was to worship the Lord by naming the place where he encountered Him.

Also, Genesis 28:20-22 records Jacob’s fifth and final response to the dream, which was to make a vow, which expressed for the first time his faith in the Lord.

Genesis 28:18

“So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top.”

The next act of worship that Jacob performs is that he erects a limestone pillar to memorialize the Lord appearing to him and giving him assurance that he would inherit the blessings, promises, responsibilities, and privileges of the Abrahamic

Covenant and would return to the land of Canaan. As an expression of his worship towards the Lord, Jacob sets up a memorial to mark the spot where the Lord appeared to him and made promises to reassure him of his safe return to the land of Canaan.

“Pillar” is the noun *matstsevah* (hb*x@m^) (mats-say-vaw), which denotes a single upright stone pillar set up as a monument and a memorial to mark the spot where the Lord had appeared to him and made promises to him.

The terrain in Bethel is limestone and so Jacob takes the stone he used for a pillow and sets it up as a monument, a memorial to mark the spot that the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

Notice that Jacob did not build an altar as Abraham had done since he had no animals to sacrifice. This would be the first of three times that Jacob would erect a pillar to memorialize an event.

In Genesis 31:45, Jacob erected a memorial a second time to stand as a witness to the oral contract between him and his uncle Laban and called it “Galeed,” which is the Hebrew term for “witness heap.”

In Genesis 35:14, after returning from his exile in Paddan Aram, Jacob erected a memorial a third time to mark the occasion when the Lord appeared to him again and fulfilled His promises to bring him back to the land of Canaan..

Memorials like the one set up by Jacob were set up to recall divine visitations so that others might learn about God when they ask, “What do these stones mean?” (See Joshua 4:6).

The third act of worship that Jacob performs is that he pours oil on top of the limestone pillar. The pouring of oil on top of the limestone was an expression of Jacob’s dedication, devotion, consecration and gratitude to the Lord and recognition of the gracious promises that the Lord made to him in the dream (See Exodus 30:25-29; Leviticus 8:10-12).

The parallel structure in Hebrew text between the two sections, Genesis 28:10-13 and 16-19, shows that the worship was a response to the vision. For example, the Hebrew noun *matstsevah*, “pillar” forms a word play with the Hebrew *mutstsav*, “set

on,” which appears in Genesis 28:12 and *nitstsav*, “stood,” which appears in Genesis 28:13. *Mutstsav* is the hophal participle form of the verb *natsav* and *nitstsav* is the niphal participle form of the same verb.

There is also another wordplay where the Hebrew noun *re'sh* (var@) (roshe) appears in Genesis 28:12 for the “top” of the stairway and then again in Genesis 28:18 for the “top” of Jacob’s pillar, linking the memorial with the vision in his dream. These parallels demonstrate that Jacob’s miniature altar represented the vision.

Genesis 28:19

“He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.”

Genesis 28:20-21

“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the LORD will be my God.’”

At the beginning of Genesis 28:20, the Hebrew text literally means that “Jacob vowed a vow” since the text contains the verb *nadhar* (rd^n*) (naw-dar), “to make a vow” and its cognate noun *nedher* (rd#n#) (neh-der), “vow.”

The verb connotes the act of voluntarily and verbally dedicating and devoting oneself to the service of the Lord whereas the noun form of the word represents the thing offered to fulfill a vow.

Jacob’s vow is the longest vow in the Old Testament. Vows were not contracts or limited agreements but rather they were verbal and voluntary acts of submission to the Lord and the reorientation of one’s life to meet the Lord’s standards. Therefore, we see that Jacob’s vow will reorient his journey.

Remember, he left home because of Esau’s desire to kill him but now Jacob’s journey takes on a whole new different meaning since God has revealed to him that He has a plan for his life. Since the Lord has revealed Himself to Jacob through the theophany and guaranteed him divine protection and prosperity while in exile in Paddan

Aram, Jacob has committed himself to living according to the standards of the living God. Therefore, we see that Jacob has had a life changing experience. He went from being on the run and in doubt about his future to possessing assurance that God had a plan for his life and would make him successful.

“If” is the conditional particle *im* (sa!) (eem), which introduces the protasis of a 1st class condition, which indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument. It should “not” be translated simply “if” since that would indicate that Jacob is striking a bargain with the Lord. The context indicates that Jacob is not striking a bargain with the Lord since he has already responded to the divine revelation by worshipping the Lord with his lips, erecting a memorial, pouring oil on the top of the pillar expressing his dedication and devotion to the Lord and naming the place “house of God.”

Therefore, the conditional particle should be translated either “since” you will be with me and will protect me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father’s house in safety, and I believe you that I will, then, the Lord will be my God. Or, the word can be translated “if and let us say for the sake of argument” that you will be with me and will protect me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father’s house in safety, “and I believe you that I will,” then, the Lord will be my God.

Genesis 28:22

“This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

The tithe Jacob proposed to give the Lord was a form of taxation levied by rulers and became a definite obligation of the Mosaic Law to maintain the armies of Israel, the tabernacle or temple worship (Leviticus 27:30; Numbers 18:21, 24). Jacob proposes to give this tithe to the Lord because he now recognizes the Lord’s authority over him and does this willingly rather than from obligation.

Also, this tithe that Jacob proposes to give the Lord would provide the means to build and maintain the altar he would build, which the pillar began. Genesis 35:1-7 records that Jacob fulfilled his vow to build an altar at Bethel.

Church age believers are “never” commanded to tithe but are to give to the Lord like Jacob, willingly and in thanksgiving rather than from obligation.

2 Corinthians 9:6, 7

“Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.”

“Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

The fact that Jacob proposes to give the Lord a tenth of all that the Lord prospers him with indicates that Jacob recognized the Lord’s authority and rank and expressed his appreciation and gratefulness to the Lord for guaranteeing his safe return home.

The apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:2 instructs the believers in Corinth in the manner in which they were to give.

1 Corinthians 16:2, “On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come.”

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded believers to give generously (Matt. 5:42; 10:8; Luke 6:30, 38).

Luke 6:38, “Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure -- pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.”

The apostle Paul reminded pastor-teacher’s at Pastor’s conference to help members of the royal family of God in need and then reminds them of our Lord’s doctrinal teaching on the subject of giving (Acts 20:35).

Acts 20:35, “In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus,

that He Himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”

Genesis 29

Genesis 29:1 records Jacob excited and confident about his future after encountering a vision of angels and the preincarnate Christ who revealed the Father’s plan for his life. God’s plan for Jacob’s life involved inheriting the privileges, promises, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant as well as carrying on the Messianic line.

Genesis 28:10 records Jacob leaving Beersheba and Genesis 29:1-12 records him arriving in the city of Nahor where his uncle Laban lived, which is called in Genesis 29:1, “the land of the sons of the east.” The journey from Beersheba to Haran was approximately a seven hundred mile journey.

Now, we must remember when approaching Genesis 29 that initially Jacob was running from Esau, which was the real reason why his mother sent him to her brother Laban. The reason Rebekah gave Isaac for sending away Jacob was to secure a wife for him but this was a lie since she did not give Jacob the bride price needed to secure a bride. In fact, Genesis 28:44 records that Rebekah was planning on Jacob being a way for only a “few days.”

So initially when Jacob set out on his journey to see his uncle Laban, he was not intending to find a wife for himself. But rather he was simply looking for a place to hide out, biding his time, far away from the wrath of his brother Esau who he just took advantage of. However, the purpose of his journey changed when the Lord appeared to him at Bethel and made promises to him of numerous descendants (See Genesis 28:10-15).

Genesis 28:10-15

“Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran.”

“He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.”

“He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven;

and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.’”

“Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

Therefore, Jacob is seeking a wife in order to fulfill the Lord’s promise of numerous progeny. As we noted the excuse that Rebekah gave Isaac for sending away Jacob to her relatives to get a wife was used as a pretext to protect Jacob from Esau. What originally was the false purpose for Jacob’s journey has become the real purpose of the trip as a result of Jacob encountering the Lord at Bethel.

Also, remember, we saw that in Genesis 28:2-4, Isaac stipulated to Jacob that he was to take a wife from among the daughters of Rebekah’s brother, Laban. This has become the purpose of Jacob’s trip now that the Lord has appeared to him at Bethel and confirmed his father’s stipulation.

At this point in his life, Jacob is forty years of age.

Genesis 29:1

“Then Jacob went on his journey, and came to the land of the sons of the east.”

Jacob finally arrives in the city of Nahor or Paddan Aram in what is now known as northern Syria, which is near the city of Haran and is part of a territory called “Mesopotamia,” which extends east to the Persian Gulf.

The expression “the land of the sons of the east” is a general designation for the territory east of Palestine and suggests both that Jacob is unaware of his precise whereabouts and is in a place of danger.

The expression “Jacob went on his journey” in the Hebrew text literally means, “Jacob lifted up his feet” and is a unique expression, which means, “to put into action (his original journey).” This expression indicates that Jacob went on his journey encouraged and joyful, after the Lord appeared to him at Bethel and gave him reassuring promises and now confident that the Lord had a plan for his life.

This expression indicates that Jacob had a life changing experience at Bethel where he encountered a vision of elect angels, the preincarnate Christ, receiving promises from Him that revealed the Father’s plan for his life, which was to inherit the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant and to carry on the line of Christ.

After his encounter with the Lord at Bethel, Jacob went from being a scared, lonely, isolated individual with doubts about his future to an individual who was courageous, confident about the future and God’s love for him, aware that he is not alone. His doubts about his future have been replaced by confidence in the future because he has encountered the living God.

I’d like to ask a question of each of you and that question is this: Do you know that God loves you and that He has a plan for your life? There is one single momentous event in history that proves it and that is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Upon a cold Roman cross God showed His love by sacrificing His Son so that we might receive the forgiveness of our sins and the gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:6-11

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.”

“For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.”

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.”

“For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

“And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

God told the nation of Israel that He had a plan for them and He did this through the weeping prophet Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

Now, you might be saying to yourself, well mister...you don’t know how much of a wicked sinner that I am but may I say to you...that I’m no better than you. According to the Bible, we are all sinners in the eyes of God.

Romans 3:23, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

The Bible teaches that the entire human race at the moment of physical birth became sinners as the result of Adam’s sin in the garden.

Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

This seems unfair...why did God do this?

Romans 11:32, “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

Galatians 3:22, “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

So we are all sinners because of Adam’s sin and because of this we are all qualified for grace and a gift. When you receive a gift, you don’t work for it, do you? When you receive a gift, you simply accept.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of

yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

God loves to give gifts and He loves to give to the helpless and hopeless...like you and I and like Jacob! Grace is for the sick and the weary and for the miserable and the destitute like Jacob.

Grace is all that God is free to do for the entire human race because of the Finished Work of Jesus Christ on the cross, which was accomplished through His death as our Substitute.

Jesus Christ is God’s indescribable gift to the human race.

2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

God’s plan for all men is that He wants all men to be saved because He loves all men.

1 Timothy 2:4, “God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

Once you get saved, God has a fantastic plan laid out for you from eternity past. God’s plan from eternity past for every believer is that they be conformed to the image of Christ or in other words, that they possessed the character and nature of Christ.

Romans 8:28-39

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren.”

“and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.”

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?”

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?"

"Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies."

"who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us."

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

"Just as it is written, 'FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED.'"

"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us."

"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers."

"nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

After we get saved, God wants us to grow up to spiritual maturity meaning to become like Christ.

Ephesians 4:15, 16

"but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ."

"from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

We must eat our spiritual food every day in order to grow up to spiritual maturity.

Matthew 4:4, "MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD."

The Word of God gives us the power to become like Christ.

Hebrews 4:12, "The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart."

God promises to complete this work of conforming us to the image of Christ.

Philippians 1:6, "I am confident of this very same thing, namely that, the One (God the Holy Spirit) who began in all of you a good work that is divine in character, will bring it to completion up to the day of Christ who is Jesus."

God will complete His plan of conforming us into the image of Christ at the rapture of the church when He will give us our resurrection bodies.

Philippians 3:20, 21

"For our citizenship exists from eternity past in the realm of the heavens, out from which also we ourselves at the present time are eagerly anticipating as Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Who will cause our humiliating body to be outwardly transformed to be identical in essence with His glorious body because of the power that will enable Him to marshal all things created to Himself."

Genesis 29:2

"He looked, and saw a well in the field, and behold, three flocks of sheep were lying there beside it, for from that well they watered the flocks. Now the stone on the mouth of the well was large."

The expression "He looked and saw (*hinneh*, "behold")" brings the reader alongside of Jacob, capturing the scene for us emphasizing the parallel between Jacob arriving seeking a wife for himself and Eliezer seeking a bride for Isaac who was of course, Rebekah.

Genesis 29:3

"When all the flocks were gathered there, they would then roll the stone from the mouth of the well and water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the mouth of the well."

“Cisterns and sometimes wells were covered in by a broad and thick flat stone with a round hole cut in the middle, which in its turn is often covered with a heavy stone, which it requires two or three men to roll away, and which is removed only a particular times” (S.R. Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, London: Methuen 1916, page 269, cited by Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary*, Zondervan, page 400).

The large stone covering the well indicated that the well was private property. The large stone would not only keep the well clean and to protect against anyone accidentally falling into it but it would also restrict the use of the well to a select group of shepherds who were authorized by the owner of the well to move it.

The fact that Genesis 29:2 describes the stone as being large emphasizes Jacob’s great strength since Genesis 29:10 records him moving it all by himself without any help from the shepherds after being told that Laban’s daughter Rachel was arriving with her flock.

Nahum Sarna, “The prominence given to ‘the stone’ in this episode provides a link with the important stone of Bethel, a reminder that the God who there promised Jacob protection now endows the weary fugitive with superhuman strength” (*The JPS Torah Commentary, The Jewish Publication Society*, page 202).

The stone that Jacob used as a pillow became a part of his encounter with the Lord and this stone plays a role in his meeting his wife Rachel. The former rock speaks of God’s presence in the life of Jacob whereas this stone speaks of the power of God who is able to direct him providentially to his wife and help him fulfill the Lord’s will for his life to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel and to carry on the Messianic line.

Genesis 29:4

“Jacob said to them, ‘My brothers, where are you from?’ And they said, ‘We are from Haran.’”

Jacob addresses these shepherds as “my brothers,” which is broad Hebrew term and is used by Jacob as a general greeting meaning, “my friends.” His question “where are you from” indicates he does not know that he has arrived at his destination.

Genesis 29:5

“He said to them, ‘Do you know Laban the son of Nahor?’ And they said, ‘We know him.’”

Jacob describes his uncle Laban as the “son of Nahor” even though he was the grandson of Nahor because in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages there is no specific word for grandson so that the word “son” can refer to any descendant down the line.

Jacob asks the shepherds if they knew his uncle Laban even though they were from Haran since Laban lived in the city of Nahor, which was located near Haran.

Genesis 29:6

“And he said to them, ‘Is it well with him?’ And they said, ‘It is well, and here is Rachel his daughter coming with the sheep.’”

In typical oriental style, Jacob asked about Laban’s health. Then, we see Rachel providentially arriving on the scene with a flock of sheep just like Jacob’s mother Rebekah arrived at the well to meet Abraham’s servant Eliezer who was commissioned by Abraham to secure a wife for Jacob’s father Isaac (See Genesis 24).

The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

“Rachel” is the proper noun *rachel* (lj@r*) (raw-khale) and in the Hebrew means, “ewe” meaning the female of the sheep, especially of the mature.

Genesis 29:17 describes Rachel as being beautiful in both form and face. Unlike Abraham’s servant Eliezer who tested the character of Rebekah, Jacob does not do so. From what is related to us concerning her character there does not seem much to claim any high degree of admiration and esteem. In a marked manner Rachel’s character shows the traits of her family, cunning and covetousness, so evident in Laban, Rebekah and Jacob.

Though a believer in the true God (30:6, 8, 22), she was yet given to the superstitions of her country, the worshipping of the teraphim, etc.

(31:19). The futility of her efforts in resorting to self-help and superstitious expedients, the love and stronger faith of her husband (35:2-4), were the providential means of purifying her character.

Although Rachel was Jacob's favorite wife, the line of David and the Messianic line passed through Rachel's sister, Leah and her son Judah and not Rachel. Leah bore Jacob six sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulon and one daughter Dinah (See Genesis 29:32-35; 30:17-21) whereas Rachel bore only two children, Joseph and Benjamin and she died giving in Bethlehem giving birth to the latter.

The Word of God indicates that Leah and not Rachel was Jacob's right woman as indicating by the following.

First of all, when we take into consideration of the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God, we must acknowledge that, in spite of the deceptiveness of Laban, Leah was Jacob's wife. Furthermore, it was Leah, not Rachel, who became the mother of Judah, who was to be the heir through whom the Messiah would come (cf. 49:8-12).

Also it was Levi, a son of Leah, who provided the priestly line in later years. It seems noteworthy that both Leah and her handmaid had at least twice the number of children as compared to Rachel and her maid (cf. 29:31-30:24; 46:15, 18, 22, 25). The firstborn was always to have a double portion and so it would seem Leah did, so far as children are concerned.

The fifth factor, which reveals the superiority of Leah to Rachel is that Rachel died at an early age, yet she was the younger sister. When she died, she was buried on the way to Bethlehem (35:19) and yet when Leah died later, she was buried with Jacob in the cave at Machpelah (49:31).

Lastly, the Word of God reveals that Jacob chose Rachel based solely upon looks and did not take into consideration her character as Abraham's servant Eliezer did when selecting Rebekah for Isaac.

The fact that Rachel is arriving with a flock of sheep indicates that she was a shepherdess.

Genesis 29:7

“He said, ‘Behold, it is still high day; it is not time for the livestock to be gathered. Water the sheep, and go, pasture them.’”

The term “high day” refers to noon time. Jacob knew the shepherding business since he was one himself and therefore knew that noon time was not the time to gather the livestock so he tells them to water the sheep and go pasture them.

Now on the surface, it appears that either the shepherds are lazy or young boys waiting for adults to move the stone but neither is the case. It appears that Jacob thought they were lazy as well since it made little sense to him for these shepherds to be sitting around the well waiting until later to water their sheep when they could water them now and take them back to pasture for several hours.

The practical thing to do was to water the sheep now and not to wait until later. Jacob's question was foolish to the shepherds because he was ignorant of the fact that the owner of the well had established certain procedures for the use of the well. Jacob was right that the procedure was impractical but he is ignorant that this procedure was set by the owner of the well, which he in the end disregards demonstrating his impatience and lack of respect for the property of others.

The shepherds knew that sheep grew faster grazing on the grassland rather than standing about the well where the grass had long before been consumed. However, the well, it seems, was not theirs to be used at their convenience.

In the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a well was a valuable resource, much as an oil well would be today. As such, it had to belong to somebody, and that person would prescribe how and when the well was to be used, and probably at what price. The agreement between the well owner and the shepherds seems to be that the well could be used once a day.

The shepherds must first be gathered at the well with their flocks. Then the owner or his hired servants (“they,” verse 8) would roll the large stone away and the sheep could be watered, perhaps in the order that the flocks arrived. This would explain why the shepherds and their flocks

were there so early. In this way, what was most profitable (this is what Jacob's question was getting at) was not practical. The owner's stipulations must be adhered to.

Undoubtedly, the shepherds disliked Jacob since he is a stranger to them who has just insinuated that they were lazy and was telling them what to do. They were saying to themselves, "who does this jerk think he is telling us what to do and insinuating that we are lazy?"

Genesis 29:8

"But they said, 'We cannot, until all the flocks are gathered, and they roll the stone from the mouth of the well; then we water the sheep.'"

The response of the shepherds to Jacob's command indicates that there was a local regulation stipulated by the owners ("they") of the well that the large stone could not be moved until a certain time in the evening at which time all the flocks of the area were to be watered in turn, in order of arrival. Apparently, in order to be the first to water their flocks, shepherds would frequently come in rather early in the afternoon and there lie awaiting their turn, when they might yet have been out pasturing their flocks. Those that arrived first would get to water their flocks first and so some would get in line early.

Genesis 29:9

"While he was still speaking with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess."

Genesis 29:10

"When Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, Jacob went up and rolled the stone from the mouth of the well and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother."

The expression "his mother's brother" appears three times and links the incident with the instructions from Isaac (Genesis 27:43; 28:2) and implies that Rachel is to become Jacob's wife. Jacob's reaction in moving the large stone by himself upon seeing Rachel for the first time not only indicates his great strength but that this encounter with Rachel was "love at first sight." He

is so excited and overcome with emotion and filled with adrenaline knowing that the Lord has providentially led him to one of the daughters of his mother's brother, Laban that he single handedly moves the large stone from the well.

Jacob knows that this is no coincidence but that the Lord has fulfilled His promise to him and has providentially directed him to come to the right place at the right time to meet who he thinks is his right woman.

Genesis 29:11

"Then Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted his voice and wept."

A kiss was a customary greeting among relatives since in Genesis 29:13, Laban kisses Jacob upon meeting him. In the Middle East, men are less reserved than men in the West so it was not unusual for a man to publicly display his emotions as Jacob does here.

The fact that Jacob kisses Rachel without first identifying himself and weeps audibly expresses the fact that Jacob is overcome with emotion as a result of seeing the providence of God at work in his life.

The fact that Jacob moves the large stone by himself upon seeing Rachel and his kissing her without first identifying himself to her not only indicates that the Lord is working in his life but also indicates "love at first sight."

Further confirming this interpretation is that in his first interview with Laban recorded in Genesis 29:14-20, Jacob agrees to work seven years for Laban as the "bride-price" so that he can marry Rachel and which seven years were said to be "like a few days because of his love for her."

We can be sure that Rachel must have been stunned by this strong, self-confident and bold stranger who kisses her without identifying himself first.

Genesis 29:12, "Jacob told Rachel that he was a relative of her father and that he was Rebekah's son, and she ran and told her father."

Rachel's reaction upon hearing Jacob explain that he was her cousin expresses her great emotion and excitement upon this first encounter with her

future husband. She would have also been excited for her father since Jacob was the son of her father's mother or in other words, his nephew.

Undoubtedly, Rachel had heard the stories of his father's sister, Rebekah, meeting Abraham's servant Eliezer at a well and her marriage to Isaac and was thinking that maybe her marriage would come about in similar fashion.

In Genesis 29:13-14, we will see Jacob meeting Laban for the first time and staying with Laban for a month.

Genesis 29:13

“So when Laban heard the news of Jacob his sister's son, he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him and brought him to his house. Then he related to Laban all these things.”

The name “Laban” (/b*1*) (Hebrew: *lavan*) means, “white” and is used elsewhere in the Bible (Isa. 24:23; 30:26; cf. Song. 6:10) as a poetic metonym for the moon.

The accounts of Laban are found in Genesis 24 and 29-31 and whose grandfather was Nahor, Abraham's brother, and of course his sister was Rebekah and his daughter was Rachel, the wife of Jacob. Laban lived in the city of Nahor near Haran along one of the tributaries of the Euphrates River in what is now modern Syria and his occupation was a sheep and goat herder.

Just as the gold jewelry that his sister Rebekah received from Abraham's servant Eliezer impressed Laban and attracted his attention as recorded in Genesis 24:30 so the thought of Jacob doing the same and his strength would have attracted Laban.

The statement that Laban “heard the news of Jacob his sister's son” means that Laban was informed of his daughter Rachel's encounter with Jacob and his great strength in moving the great stone from the well by himself and watering his flocks.

This news of Jacob would have impressed Laban since it took several men to move this large rock. Jacob's strength would attract his attention because Laban was always looking to make money. Therefore, he would be thinking of ways to exploit that strength for his own profit.

Laban runs out to meet Jacob for a couple of reasons. One, Jacob is his sister Rebekah's boy and so news of her and her family would have obviously interested him. Laban hadn't received any information about his sister since the day she left home to marry Isaac so he would be interested to see how things have been with her.

Also, Laban ran to meet Jacob because he is thinking of material gain since he would recall that years ago, Abraham's servant Eliezer arrived at his home and bestowed great wealth on his family in order for Isaac to marry his sister Rebekah. Therefore, in Genesis 29:13, we see that Laban is seeing dollar signs so to speak since he is hoping that Jacob will have a lot of wealth for him as the bride-price for one of his daughters just as Abraham's servant Eliezer did decades before when came for a bride for Isaac. But Laban would be disappointed in the fact that Jacob comes to his home without great gifts as Abraham's servant Eliezer did decades before as the bride-price so that Isaac could marry Rebekah.

Laban will clearly see and from talking to Jacob that he is on the run and has come empty handed but he will still find a way to make money off of Jacob. So right from the beginning the relationship between Jacob and Laban is flawed since Laban is a greedy individual who lusted after material gain.

The statement “he (Jacob) related to Laban all these things” indicates that Jacob informed Laban of the circumstances surrounding his visit and providential encounter with Rachel at the well.

Undoubtedly, Jacob and Laban spoke well into the night with Laban asking questions. Jacob would have entertained Laban with the story of the deception of Esau and Isaac by him and his mother to secure the blessing of the birthright. He would have provided information to Laban about the marriage of his parents and how the Lord had blessed them as well as information about his grandfather Abraham.

Also, Jacob would have reported to Laban his encounter with the Lord at Bethel and that he has a new purpose in life as a result. He would have informed Laban that after this encounter with the Lord, he was indeed seeking a wife in order to fulfill the divine promises.

As we noted, initially, Jacob was just biding his time and hiding from Esau until his anger subsided but the encounter with the Lord at Bethel changed all that. This report was sufficient for Laban to be convinced that Jacob was who he claimed to be and, therefore, a blood relative.

Genesis 29:14

“Laban said to him, ‘Surely you are my bone and my flesh.’ And he stayed with him a month.”

After Jacob gave his report to Laban, Laban responds to Jacob by saying, “surely, you are my bone and my flesh,” which was a welcome corresponding to the English saying, “You are my own flesh and blood” and meant acceptance of Jacob as a member of Laban’s household.

Jacob stayed with Laban a month, which would be plenty of time to demonstrate to Laban his great strength. During this month, Jacob would have undoubtedly helped Laban in the family business by taking care of the flocks, which would have kept him near Rachel who was a shepherdess. This time spent with Rachel would have convinced Jacob that she was his right woman and as we will see, it did. Laban would have also seen that Jacob was a hard worker, which he demonstrated by moving the large rock and watering his flocks that Rachel was tending. He would have thought of ways to exploit this fact.

Also, during this month, Laban would have observed that Jacob was in love with his daughter Rachel and would seek to exploit this for personal and material gain.

The fact that Jacob was strong and a good worker would convince Laban that Jacob would make a fine son-in-law and could stay on to work for him in place of the traditional bride-price.

This month brought both Laban and Jacob to the conclusion that a continuing relationship between them could be of mutual advantage.

Genesis 29:15-20 presents to us the record of Jacob agreeing to work for Laban for seven years in exchange for being betrothed to Rachel.

Genesis 29:15

“Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘Because you are my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, what shall your wages be?’”

Laban’s question is motivated by his knowledge of several factors. One, Laban could obviously see that Jacob was in love with his daughter Rachel and the second was that Jacob did not have the means to pay Laban for the bride-price in order to marry Rachel.

The “bride-price” refers to the compensation paid to the family of the bride for the loss of the bride’s presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to Laban’s family that Rachel would be well cared for by Jacob. The “bride-price” must not be confused with a “dowry,” since the latter was provided by the bride’s family whereas the former was provided by the groom.

Laban would know from Jacob’s report that initially Jacob came to visit him because he was on the run from Esau but his encounter with the Lord has changed his purpose and now he is seeking a wife. Since Jacob left home simply to avoid Esau and was not anticipating securing a bride from Laban, he did not have the financial means to offer Laban as the bride-price for Rachel. So Laban figures that Jacob’s only alternative would be for Jacob to work for him as the bride-price or compensation to marry Rachel.

Laban also is reported to not have any sons at this point in the narrative to help him with his flocks and herds. This is why Rachel was a shepherdess. So the fact that Laban does not have a man around to help him with his business would have further motivated him to find a way to have Jacob stay with him. He does not have to worry about keeping Jacob around since his daughter’s beauty has solved this problem for him.

Also, Laban exploited the fact that he and Jacob were related since he knew that Jacob would not mind working for a relative.

Laban’s proposal is very clever. We read in Genesis 29:15: “Laban said to him, ‘Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be.’” In other words: “Since you are my relative, I am under no obligation to pay you for your work,

which should be considered payment for room and board. But since I am generous, I am offering you a salary.”

Laban sounds very concerned about the well-being of his nephew but his use of the terms “serve” and “wages” reveal his true intentions with Jacob, which was to exploit Jacob’s love for his daughter Rachel for personal profit. Laban is smooth talking Jacob and has reduced him to a laborer under contract.

Laban wanted to bind Jacob to him in some way and very craftily lets Jacob name the terms of the agreement, knowing full well that because of Jacob’s love for his daughter Rachel, he would get a great bargain by approaching him this way.

Bruce K. Waltke, “Laban is degrading the blood relationship between himself and Jacob into an economic arrangement. What Laban should have done as a loving relative is to help Jacob get a start on building his own home, as Jacob asks of Laban in 30:25-34 (esp. vv. 26, 30, 33). Instead, Laban keeps Jacob as nothing more than a laborer under contract, as Jacob bitterly complains in 31:38-42...Laban’s smooth talk reduces Jacob to a lowly laborer under contract. Their relationship for the next twenty years is that of an oppressive lord over an indentured servant paying off a bride price, not of an uncle helping his blood relative...He would rather give any wage than give Jacob the dignity and help due a relative” (Genesis, A Commentary, pages 404-405, Zondervan).

Genesis 29:16

“Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel.”

Genesis 29:17

“And Leah’s eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face.”

Jacob’s response to Laban’s question is delayed in Genesis 29:16-17 in order to provide necessary background information regarding Leah and Rachel, which is essential for a full understanding of subsequent developments in the narrative.

“Leah” (*le’ah*) (ha*|@) (lay-aw), which means, “cow” and “Rachel” (*rachel*) (lj@r*) (raw-khale)

means, “ewe” meaning the female of the sheep, especially of the mature.

Rachel’s name is mentioned again since it was necessary to introduce Leah and to explain the order of birth, which is of vital importance to the plot. These names were not unusual or derogatory but rather appropriate in a family of shepherds. However, in the case of Laban, he actually does treat these two young women like animals.

As we will see as we go further into the story, Leah was later given to Jacob contrary to his consent since he served Laban for seven years in order to marry Rachel.

Also, as we will see, Leah, though comparatively unloved by Jacob, produced more offspring than her sister and their servants combined. Her fertility was compensation for her unloved status (Gen. 29:31ff.). Little in the narratives sheds insight into Leah’s personality, aside from her competition with her sister concerning producing offspring.

Both were consulted by Jacob upon his desire to leave Laban’s household. Both were upset of their father’s demands upon Jacob and treating him deceptively.

Genesis 29:17 contrasts the appearance of these two sisters. The statement “Leah’s eyes were weak” does “not” refer to the fact that she had poor eyesight but rather that her eyes were dull in color meaning they were probably light blue or gray and not deep dark brown, which was the preferable color for standard of beauty in the Middle East.

The statement “Leah’s eyes were weak” implies that Rachel’s eyes were a deep dark brown in color, which men of the Middle East prized and this is confirmed by the description of her as being “beautiful in face.”

The expression “beautiful in face” refers to the appearance of Rachel’s face with emphasis upon her eyes since the noun *mar’eh*, “face” is related to anything having to do with seeing, including not only the act of seeing but the eyes themselves.

The statement “Leah’s eyes were weak” does “not” mean that she was homely looking since her sister Rachel was beautiful but rather it means it

was her only specific weakness in the eyes of men in Middle East in that day.

Rachel is described as being “beautiful in form” refers to the fact that she had a beautiful “figure” and does “not” imply that Leah did not have a nice figure but that Rachel’s was outstanding and superior to her sister’s.

Genesis 29:18

“Now Jacob loved Rachel, so he said, ‘I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel.’”

The statement “Jacob loved Rachel” confirms what has been implied since the beginning of the story of Jacob’s visit to Laban’s home in Paddan Aram.

Jacob’s statement “I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel” expresses the intensity of his love for Rachel and the extent to which he valued her. The seven years’ service is to be in lieu of the usual “bride-price,” known as the *mohar* in Hebrew. By making this offer to Laban, Jacob will now possess the status of an indentured laborer working to pay off the bride-price.

Since Jacob did not have the financial means necessary for the “bride-price,” he offers to work for Laban for seven years, which was a handsome marriage gift in exchange for Rachel’s hand. Jacob makes Laban an offer he can’t refuse because he does not want to risk Laban refusing him and then losing Rachel.

Genesis 29:19

“Laban said, ‘It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man; stay with me.’”

Now, it is important to understand for our future studies of Laban and Jacob that Jacob specifically offered to exchange seven years of service to Laban for Rachel and Laban’s response indicates clearly that he agrees to Jacob’s offer.

There is therefore, no ambiguity in his response as suggested by commentators since Jacob has made clear he wants Rachel and Laban agrees. The fact that Laban is quick in accepting Jacob’s proposal indicates that he had anticipated such an offer from Jacob as a result of understanding fully

Jacob’s situation of being on the run from Esau and without the necessary finances to secure a bride.

Laban’s statement “It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another man” is a deception since he later deceives Jacob by sending Leah into Jacob’s tent on his wedding night when he agreed to marry Rachel.

In those days, marriage between relatives was regarded as very desirable in that it safeguarded purity of blood, property of the family and the welfare of the daughter but this is not what Laban is thinking when he says, “It is better that I give her to you than to give her to another.”

Unknown to Jacob was that Laban had no intention of giving Rachel to him before his older daughter Leah. First he would give Leah and then Rachel in order that he might exploit Jacob to the maximum and profit greatly. Jacob’s love for Rachel has blinded him as to the true character of Laban.

In order to train Jacob, the Lord has permitted him to reap what he sowed in the sense that because he deceived his father Isaac, now his uncle Laban will deceive him. The Lord’s plan was for Jacob to be served by his younger brother but now he will serve his uncle.

Genesis 29:20

“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.”

Genesis 29:20 records that Jacob held up to his end of the agreement with Laban by doing what he said he would do, which was to serve Laban seven years for Rachel. Of course, as we will later see in the narrative, Laban does not hold up to his end of the agreement by sending Leah rather than Rachel into Jacob’s tent on his wedding night.

The statement that the seven years seemed to Jacob but a “few days” because of his love for Rachel reveals that his love for Rachel was so intense that the seven years seemed to him but a few days.

The fact that Jacob served Laban seven years for Rachel reveals how foolish his mother Rebekah was for thinking Jacob would only be away but a

“few days” until the anger of his brother Esau had subsided.

Those “few days” have now become seven years and eventually twenty!

Rebekah, like Jacob, will be permitted by the Lord to reap what she sowed in the sense that because she deceived Isaac, now Jacob will be deceived by his uncle Laban and Rebekah will never see Jacob again.

The statement that the seven years seemed to Jacob but a “few days” because he loved her so intensely sets the reader up to experience Jacob’s agony and heartbreak at Laban’s later deceiving him by having Leah rather than Rachel go into Jacob’s tent on his wedding night.

In Genesis 29:21-24, we see that the seven years have been completed and Jacob demands that Laban give him Rachel to consummate their marriage. But instead of giving Jacob Rachel, Laban deceives Jacob on his wedding night by sending into his tent her older sister Leah.

Genesis 29:21

“Then Jacob said to Laban, ‘Give me my wife, for my time is completed, that I may go in to her.’”

Even though Jacob is only betrothed or engaged to Rachel, she is reckoned as his wife according to Deuteronomy 20:7 and 22:23-25 and among the heathen in Mesopotamia.

Jacob makes this demand since he has completed his end of the agreement and has completed seven years of service for Laban as the “bride-price” to marry Rachel.

Notice that Jacob takes the initiative and not Laban who should have since Jacob has fulfilled his end of their agreement and Laban has yet to. Laban is dragging his feet since he has profited greatly from Jacob’s service according to Genesis 30:29-30. Laban is reluctant to face the prospect of losing Jacob’s services after his marriage, so therefore, he said nothing. Therefore, Jacob had to remind him to fulfill his part of their agreement.

Genesis 29:22

“Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast.”

Notice that there is no record of a response to Jacob’s demands, which suggests Laban’s reluctance to consummate and celebrate the marriage. However, without answering he prepares a feast to celebrate the marriage, not the marriage of Rachel and Jacob but of Leah and Jacob.

“The place” refers to the city of Nahor since Genesis 24:10 identifies it as the home of Laban. Laban gathered all the men from the city of Nahor not only because it was the custom of the day but also because when the prank he is about to play on Jacob becomes known by all, it will not be easy for Jacob to rid himself of Leah. It was the custom of the day that a wedding involved processions to and from the bride’s house, a reading of the marriage contract, and a large banquet attended by both families and neighbors. Of course, Jacob’s family cannot attend, which makes Jacob very vulnerable to deception and exploitation.

The first day’s celebration ended with the groom wrapping his cloak around the bride who was veiled throughout the ceremony, and taking her to his bedroom where the marriage was consummated. The feasting and celebration continued for an entire week after the marriage was consummated on the first day.

“Feast” is the noun *mishteh* (חַמְשָׁה) (*mish-teh*), which means, “drinking” and therefore implies that Laban was putting on a drinking party indicating that one of the reasons why Jacob did not know that he was making love to Leah and not Rachel was that he was drunk.

This word indicates that Jacob was not in control of his faculties on his wedding night because he was drinking with all the men of the city. Therefore, we see that Laban uses this “beer-bash” or “wine-fest” to dull Jacob’s senses in order to deceive Jacob so that he doesn’t notice that he is having sex with Leah rather than Rachel.

Genesis 29:23

“Now in the evening he took his daughter Leah, and brought her to him; and Jacob went in to her.”

Leah would have veiled herself in order to identify herself to Jacob that she is the bride, which was customary to do in the marriage ceremony (See Genesis 24:65). Laban not only uses the booze and

bridal veil to pull off his deception of Jacob but also employs the cover of darkness as well.

Just as Jacob took advantage of his father's blindness so Laban uses the cover of darkness to outwit Jacob. Just as his sister Rebekah deceived her husband Isaac by putting the goat skins and Esau's clothing on Jacob, and preparing a gourmet meal to deceive Isaac into bestowing the blessing of the birthright upon Jacob rather than Esau so Laban uses the booze, the bridal veil and the cover of darkness to deceive Jacob into sleeping with Leah. Jacob pretended to be his older brother Esau and now Leah is pretending to be her younger sister Rachel.

It would be safe to assume that while Leah was sleeping with Jacob, that Rachel would have been very jealous of her sister Leah and angry at her father.

Now, Leah obviously obeyed her father and agreed to his scheme to deceive Jacob, which was wrong of her to do. Yes, she was under her father's authority and yes she should obey her father's authority but not to commit sin as we see here. She could have at least sent someone secretly to Jacob to warn him of the plot but she never does.

Undoubtedly, she was jealous of Rachel because Rachel was more beautiful than her and Jacob loved Rachel rather than herself. Therefore, she agreed to take part in the scheme because she too appears to be in love with Jacob.

Laban knows that once Jacob recognizes that he has been deceived and has yet to consummate his marriage to Rachel that he will work for another seven years since his love for Rachel is so intense. By executing this scheme to deceive Jacob, Laban would also solve his problem of finding a wife for Leah.

At worst, if Jacob refused to work another seven years for Rachel, Laban knew that it would not be too difficult to find a husband for her since she had a great figure and big beautiful brown eyes as men of the Middle East love.

Also, even if Jacob eloped with Rachel, Laban would not have lost anything and so it was worth the effort from Laban's perspective to attempt this deception of Jacob.

Genesis 29:24

“Laban also gave his maid Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a maid.”

It was customary in the ancient world for the bride's father to give her a large wedding present, a dowry. Ancient marriage contracts demonstrate that dowries usually were composed of clothing, furniture and money and served as a nest egg for the wife in case her husband died or she was divorced.

The Old Testament does not mention dowries except in cases where something very valuable like a slave girl is given. It was customary in the days of the patriarchs for a father to present his daughter with a personal servant on her wedding day. So we see that even though Laban is unfair in his treatment of Jacob, he does give Leah a dowry in the form of his personal servant, Zilpah.

“Zilpah” is the proper noun *zilpah* (hP*!lzl) (zil-paw), whose name means, “intimacy” and who later bore Jacob two sons, who were named “Gad” and “Asher.”

Amazingly, the grace of God was manifested by Laban sending Leah in to the tent of Jacob rather than Rachel since Jacob did not recognize it at the time but Leah was in reality a gift from the Lord to him and was in fact his right woman and not Rachel.

In Genesis 29:25-30, we see that Jacob discovers the next morning that he has been deceived by Laban and is trapped by him into agreeing to another seven years of service as the bride-price for marrying Rachel. The fact that Jacob is trapped into another seven years of service was a manifestation of divine discipline in the life of Jacob for his deception of his father Isaac and cheating Esau.

Genesis 29:25

“So it came about in the morning that, behold, it was Leah! And he said to Laban, ‘What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served with you? Why then have you deceived me?’”

Just imagine the scene, it is early the next morning and Jacob awakes from the most restful sleep of his life after a night of making love to who he

assumed was Rachel. Jacob would open his eyes and say to himself “what a beautiful day, what a wonderful night and what an exciting future there is for me with my wife!” But what a shock it must have been as the first ray of sunlight burst into the tent to reveal that the woman that was in his arms was Leah, not Rachel!

The expression “behold it was Leah” describes the shock from Jacob’s perspective in his thinking.

The question “What is this you have done to me,” expresses verbally Jacob’s shock as to Laban’s deception.

Jacob’s next question “Was it not for Rachel that I served with you” reminds Laban of the terms of their agreement.

Jacob’s third and final question “Why then have you deceived me” echoes the words of Esau upon learning that Jacob had deceived their father and cheated him out of the blessings of the birthright (See Genesis 27:35-36).

Just as Jacob deceived his father in order to cheat his older brother Esau from receiving the blessing of the birthright, so now Jacob is deceived by Laban so that Jacob sleeps with Laban’s oldest daughter Leah rather than the younger daughter Rachel.

The shoe is now on the other foot; the deceiver has now been deceived. Jacob has reaped what he has sowed.

Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

Jacob sowed the seeds of deception by obeying his mother Rebekah and deceiving his blind father Isaac into cheating Esau out of the blessing of the birthright. Jacob has reaped the seeds of deception which he sowed by being deceived by Leah and Laban.

It is interesting that in both deceptions, Jacob and Rebekah’s and Laban and Leah’s, the deception had been commanded by a parent and in both cases the purpose of the deception was to acquire something desperately desired. In their case with Esau and Isaac, Jacob and Rebekah were convinced that their deception was a case of the ends justifying the means. In the case of Jacob and

Rachel, Laban and Leah were convinced that their deception was also a case of the ends justifying the means since the custom was that the older daughter be married first and not be preceded by the younger.

So Jacob is understandably shocked as to what has happened to him and demands an explanation for the deception.

Genesis 29:26

“But Laban said, ‘It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the firstborn.’”

If Laban was an honorable and honest man he should have informed Jacob of this local custom. Notice that Laban’s response to Jacob demand for an explanation as to why Leah was in his tent and not Rachel was not to deny that he had deceived Jacob but simply refers to the local tradition of marrying off the firstborn before the younger. There are no apologies from Laban and in fact he attempts to turn the tables on Jacob and make him out to be the bad guy.

Laban’s response to Jacob feigns moral outrage and makes Jacob out to be the guilty one for asking such questions. Hypocritically, Laban hides behind local tradition to mask his guilt and dishonorable conduct. Laban’s response reveals that he thought that the ends justify the means.

The terms “younger” and “firstborn” are unknowingly employed by Laban under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to remind Jacob of the deception of his older brother Esau and stunned Jacob into silence so that he does not reprove Laban for not having informed him of the local custom in the first place.

Jacob knows now first hand what it feels like to be deceived and cheated. Here we see that the Lord is teaching Jacob that the ends does “not” justify the means! This, the Holy Spirit convicts Jacob of since Jacob’s anger subsides and he agrees to work another seven years for Laban to consummate his love for Rachel.

Now, he knows how his brother Esau and his father Isaac felt. God the Holy Spirit has rebuked and disciplined Jacob for deceiving his father Isaac and cheating his brother Esau in order to

advance him to further spiritual growth. This discipline was a demonstration of the Lord's love for Jacob.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father's will.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

Hebrews 4:12, "The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16-17, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer.

Revelation 3:19, "Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."

Hebrews 12:5-10

"and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons, 'MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF

THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM.'"

"FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES."

"It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?"

"But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons."

"Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?"

"For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

"All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase "share His holiness."

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and undeserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might accquire the character of our heavenly Father.

Ecclesiastes 7:14, "In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider -- God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him."

In order to receive discipline without getting bitter and complaining, the believer must recognize and submit to the authority of the Word of God, the delegated authority of the pastor-teacher and the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history and therefore the believer's circumstances.

Proverbs 3:11-12, "My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof,

for whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Job 5:17-18, “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Proverbs 15:32-33, “He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.”

Genesis 29:27

“Complete the week of this one, and we will give you the other also for the service which you shall serve with me for another seven years.”

“Complete the week of this one” refers to fulfilling Leah’s week and “the other” refers to Rachel. The fact that Laban does not use their names reveals that Laban was not a very good father since he is treating daughters like property rather than his children.

Laban proposes that Jacob fulfill the week with Leah and then he will give Rachel to him as well in exchange for another seven years of service. He is trying to make himself appear generous by offering to give Jacob Rachel and then letting him fulfill the seven years of service.

There are several reasons why Jacob agrees to Laban’s ridiculous and unreasonable and unjust proposal. The first is that Jacob turns Laban down he will lose Rachel whom he loves. Secondly, he was isolated and therefore without family support. Thirdly, Jacob recognizes at this point that the Lord is disciplining him through this injustice. The fourth reason that Jacob does not object to Laban’s proposal was that he would only have to wait a week before he could consummate his marriage to Rachel. Lastly, Jacob does not object to Laban’s proposal out of respect for Leah and does not want to dishonor her and himself before the men of the city of Nahor.

Although, Jacob was prone to deception and lying, it can be said that he fulfilled his family responsibilities and honored his agreements. The

fact that he honored his agreements is indicated in that Laban trusts Jacob to honor his contract with him by first giving him Rachel before he had fulfilled the seven year contract (See Genesis 29:30).

Genesis 29:28

“Jacob did so and completed her week, and he gave him his daughter Rachel as his wife.”

The only good thing about Laban’s proposal was that Jacob did not have to wait another seven years to finally consummate his love for Rachel but only had to wait until the week with Leah was over.

The fact that Jacob did not have to wait another seven years until he could consummate his marriage with Rachel is indicated by a comparison of Genesis 29:28 and 30, which records that he consummated his marriage to Rachel first and then he served Laban for another seven years.

Genesis 29:29

“Laban also gave his maid Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her maid.”

The name “Bilhah” is the proper noun *bilhah* (hh*!B!), whose name means, “carefree” and who later bore Jacob two sons, who were named “Dan” and “Naphtali.”

Genesis 29:30

“So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.”

So after finally consummating his marriage with Rachel, Jacob served Laban another seven years. However, this would result in a bitter rivalry and unhappiness in Jacob’s home for years to come since he loved Rachel more than Leah.

The fact that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah would be a cause of jealousy and bitterness between the two women resulting in division and unhappiness in the home of Jacob for years to come.

Notice, that the Word of God does not say that Jacob did not love Leah but rather he loved Rachel “more” than Leah implying obviously that he did have love for Leah but it was not as passionate as his love for Rachel. Throughout all of the

problems that Jacob had with Laban and Rachel and Leah, the Lord was still accomplishing His purposes to bring in the Savior of the world and fulfilling His promises to Abraham, Isaac and now Jacob.

The Lord promised Jacob that he would have numerous descendants and this would be fulfilled through both Leah and her maid Zilpah, from whom eight of the twelve tribes traced their descent. Thus not even the deceitfulness of Jacob and Laban could overrule or prevent the fulfillment of the divine promises and plan of salvation.

Not only was the additional seven years of service a manifestation of divine discipline in the life of Jacob for his deception of his father Isaac and cheating Esau but also this discipline was to prepare Jacob to be a leader of God's people.

In Genesis 25:23, the Lord prophesied that Esau's descendants, the Edomites would serve Jacob's descendants, the Israelites and then Genesis 27:29, Isaac under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit prophesied that the Gentile nations would serve Jacob's descendants the Israelites. But in Genesis 29:30, we see no one serving Jacob but rather Jacob serving others, which would prepare him to occupy a position of spiritual leadership as the head of twelve tribes that would be named after him.

Oswald Sanders, in his classic book on leadership entitled *Spiritual Leadership*, has some fitting remarks: "The true spiritual leader is concerned infinitely more with the service he can render God and his fellowmen than with the benefits and pleasures he can extract from life. He aims to put more into life than he takes out of it." (*Spiritual Leadership*, page 20).

Through this adversity with Laban, the Lord is going to teach Jacob how to be a true spiritual leader of His people. But at this point in his life, Jacob is more concerned about the benefits and pleasures he can extract from life rather than the service he can render God and his fellowmen. At this point in his life, Jacob aims to take more out of life than aims to put into it.

The Lord prophesied that Jacob would be the leader of His people but the Lord is going to teach

him through this adversity with Laban that leadership in His kingdom is based upon love and humility and putting others ahead of oneself and not hate, and arrogance and selfishness.

The Lord Jesus taught His disciples that in the kingdom of God, those who are great and occupy positions of spiritual leadership serve others rather than be served.

Matthew 20:20-28

"Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him."

"And He said to her, 'What do you wish?' She said to Him, 'Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.'"

"But Jesus answered, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They said to Him, 'We are able.'"

"He said to them, 'My cup you shall drink; but to sit on My right and on My left, this is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by My Father.'"

"And hearing this, the ten became indignant with the two brothers."

"But Jesus called them to Himself and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them.'"

"It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The Lord Jesus Christ provided His disciples with a visual illustration concerning the spiritual principle that leadership in the kingdom of God is based upon love and humility and putting others ahead of oneself and not hate, and arrogance and selfishness.

John 13:1-17

"Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus knowing that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end."

"During supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him."

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself."

"Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."

"So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, 'Lord, do You wash my feet?'"

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'What I do you do not realize now, but you will understand hereafter.'"

"Peter said to Him, 'Never shall You wash my feet!' Jesus answered him, 'If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me.'"

"Simon Peter said to Him, 'Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head.'"

"Jesus said to him, 'He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.'"

"For He knew the one who was betraying Him; for this reason He said, 'Not all of you are clean.'"

"So when He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you?'"

"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am."

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet."

"For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."

"Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him."

"If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."

Paul commanded the Philippians to put each other ahead of themselves as Christ did.

Philippians 2:3-8

"All of you continue thinking the one thing. Never (thinking) according to inordinate ambition nor according to self-deception but with humility. All of you continue regarding each other as better than yourselves."

"Each stop being occupied with your own interests but rather the interests of others."

"Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset."

"On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men."

"In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross."

The Lord Jesus Christ was rewarded for His service at the Cross, which He accomplished by humble obedience to the Father's will and which obedience was motivated by His love for the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11

"For this very reason in fact God the Father has promoted Him to the highest-ranking position and has awarded to Him the rank, which is superior to every rank."

“In order that in the sphere of this rank possessed by Jesus every person must bow, celestials and terrestrials and sub-terrestrials.”

“Also, every person must publicly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father.”

In the same way that our Lord Jesus Christ was rewarded for His service so too will our Christian service be rewarded by the Lord Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church if it has been properly motivated by our love for the Lord, which expresses itself in obedience to His command to love one another as He has loved (1 Cor. 3:11-14; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Colossians 3:23-25

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

“knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

“For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.”

The believer must obey the Lord Jesus Christ’s command to love one another as He has loved in order for his Christian service to be productive and rewarded by the Lord at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church.

John 13:34, “A new commandment in character and quality and example I give to all of you, that all of you divinely love one another, even as I have divinely loved all of you, that all of you also divinely love one another.”

Obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved us is the response in our soul to the self-sacrificial manner in which the Lord loved us at the Cross.

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

The believer’s faith in the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s love and service for him, which expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved, produces humility in

the believer, which expresses itself in putting others ahead of yourself.

1 John 4:19, “We love, because He first loved us.”

Therefore, productive Christian service is motivated by our love for the Lord and our love for the Lord is the response of our entire being to the self-sacrificial manner in which He loved us and is expressed by our obedience to His command to love one another as He has loved us at the Cross.

Deuteronomy 10:12, “Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Productive Christian service demands proper motivation. Motivation is that which prompts a person to act in a certain way, the goal of one’s actions. Motivation for Christian service begins with the believer prayerfully meditating upon the Spirit’s revelation in the Word of God of the Lord Jesus Christ’s self-sacrificial love and service for him at the Cross. Then the believer must accept by faith the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s self-sacrificial love and service for him, and which faith expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved him.

This acceptance by faith of the Spirit’s revelation of the Lord’s love, which expresses itself in obedience to the Lord’s command to love one another as He has loved, constitutes serving by means of the Spirit.

Philippians 3:2-3, “Beware of those dogs, beware of those evil workers, beware of the mutilation because we are the circumcision, those who are serving (God the Father) by means of the Spirit of God, who are priding themselves in the nature and doctrine of Christ Jesus, who have no confidence in the flesh.”

Service for the Lord and other believers is inextricably tied together since we love the Lord who we can’t see in our fellow believer who we can see.

1 John 4:20, 21

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.”

“And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

So it is through love that we are to serve one another, which Paul taught to the Galatians.

Galatians 5:13, “For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.”

Now another lesson that we can learn from Genesis 29 is that Jacob’s physical attraction to Rachel blinded him to the fact that Leah was his right woman and not Rachel. It is interesting to note how different was the process by which Isaac obtained Rebekah as a wife from that means through which Jacob acquired Rachel.

Isaac was subject to his father, and it was through the wisdom of his father and his servant Eliezer, through the financial means of Abraham and through prayer that she was obtained. Jacob went off on his own with none of his father’s resources. He chose the woman with the greatest beauty and bargained with Laban for her.

To me there is no doubt that Jacob was guided more by his physical attraction for Rachel and his sex drive than any other factor. Unlike Abraham’s servant Eliezer, Jacob did not pray about this matter, so far as we are told. Unlike Abraham’s servant Eliezer, Jacob did not give any consideration to matters of character. He did not seek counsel. In fact, he sought to overturn the customs of the day and the preferences of Laban.

We live in a very sex driven, romance oriented day. We find ourselves cheering for Rachel and booing Leah. God seems to have been on the other side. What is romantic is not always right and in fact is often it is wrong. Just because you are in love with someone does not mean that God approves!

Jacob’s physical attraction towards Rachel caused him to use the well when and how he saw fit, regardless of the rules set by the owner.

Physical attraction led Jacob to choose Rachel, not Leah. We must beware of those decisions which are determined by romantic impressions or feelings or physical attraction.

Few things are as important to women today as beauty. Perhaps nothing is more important to men today than beauty. Rachel was a wonderfully-endowed woman and there is nothing wrong with that. Sarah was beautiful, and so was Rebekah but outward beauty must always be considered a secondary consideration. Jacob looked at Rachel’s exterior and investigated no further into her character.

The writer, King Lemuel, was not in error when he gave this counsel: Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, But a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised (Proverbs 31:30). This same principle is prominent in the New Testament (cf. I Timothy 2:9-10; I Peter 3:1-6).

Men and boys, we all want to be seen with the beautiful girls and we all have dreamed of dating them. Some have made great sacrifices to marry a showpiece but let us look first for character, and if we find it, let us look no further. If we find character with charm and beauty, let us consider ourselves fortunate and blessed by the Lord.

Proverbs 12:4, “A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.”

Proverbs 31:10, “A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.”

Ladies, I realize that our society has placed a premium on glamour and beauty. I understand that much of your sense of self-worth is based upon your outward attractiveness and “sex appeal.” However, that is wrong.

Our ultimate worth is that estimation which comes from God. God was not impressed with Rachel’s good looks. After all, He gave that to her in the first place. God looked upon the heart and blessed Leah. Her worth, while never fully realized by her husband, was great in the eyes of God. Remember the principle the Lord taught the prophet Samuel when selecting a king over Israel.

1 Samuel 16:7, “Do not look at his appearance, or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as men sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Genesis 29:31-35 contains the record of Leah bearing Jacob four sons whose names are Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Genesis 29:31 actually begins a section that ends in Genesis 30:24 and contains the story of the birth of Jacob’s children who would later become the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, from whom the Messiah Jesus Christ in His human nature would descend. This section is basically a study of love, sex, marriage and children and sounds like a “soap opera,” with Jacob hopping from bedroom to bedroom and his wives competing with each other for his love and affection.

Unlike today’s modern soap operas on television, the soap opera found in Genesis 29:31-30:24 is not designed to entertain us or encourage us to sin but rather, quite the opposite, it is designed to encourage us to live righteously before the Lord.

Genesis 29:31-30:24 can be divided into six sections: (1) The Lord opens Leah’s womb (29:31-35). (2) Rachel’s desire for children achieved through Bilhah (30:1-8). (3) Leah responds to Rachel by giving Jacob Zilpah who bears him two boys (30:9-13). (4) Leah desires sex from Jacob (30:14-15). (5) Jacob has sex with Leah (30:16-21) (6) God finally opens Rachel’s womb (30:22-24).

The whole episode is driven by Leah’s longing for Jacob’s love and Rachel’s craving for children. Leah’s frequent pregnancies only aggravate Rachel’s frustration at her own childlessness. It is interesting that the struggle of the sisters, Leah and

Rachel, mirrors the struggle between the brothers, Esau and Jacob of trying to out do one another.

This account is written like a soap opera so that we might be able to identify with these two women, both of whom desperately fight for Jacob’s love and affection. The circumstances surrounding the birth of Jacob’s children demonstrate the graciousness of God towards His people and in particular the nation of Israel who descended from the twelve sons of Jacob.

The record of the birth of Jacob’s children is important since it emphasizes the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to Jacob to provide him with numerous descendants. Therefore, this passage demonstrates the faithfulness of God in providing descendants as He had promised to Jacob even though he was unfaithful to God.

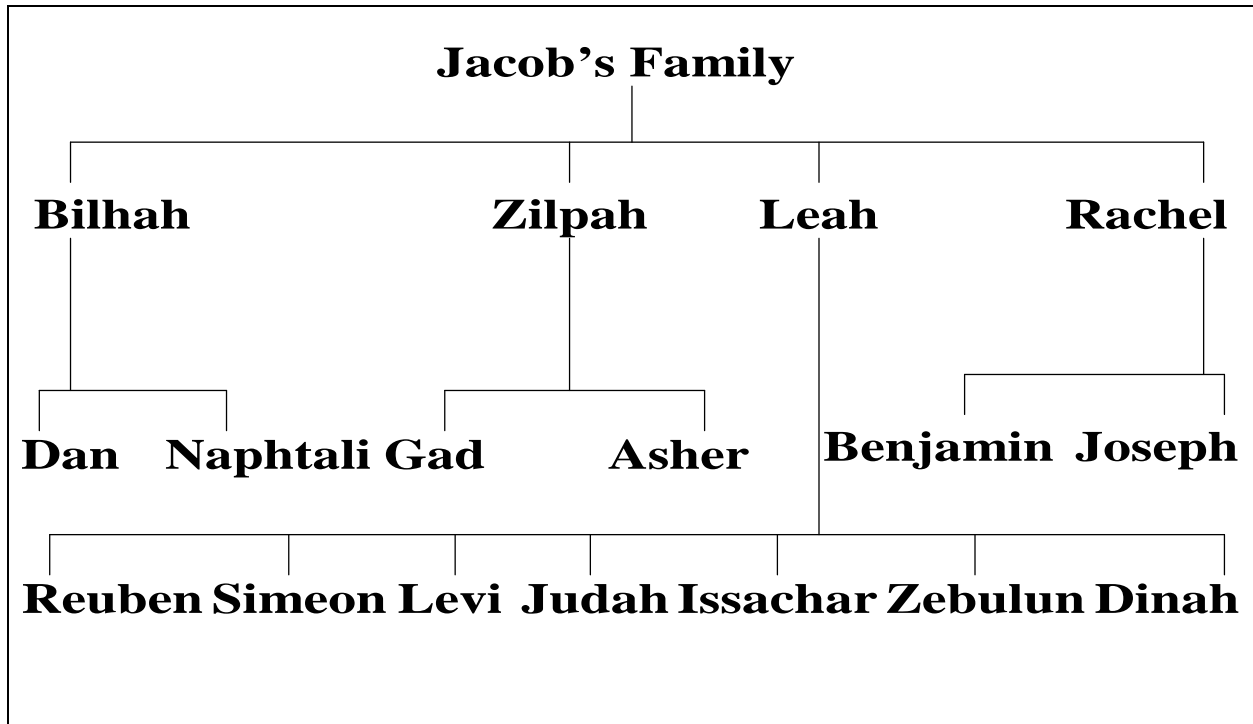
2 Timothy 2:13, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

Psalms 145:13, “The LORD is faithful to all his promises.”

Genesis 29:31, “Now the LORD saw that Leah was unloved, and He opened her womb, but Rachel was barren.”

The statement “the Lord saw that Leah was unloved and He opened her womb” expresses the Lord’s compassion towards Leah and that He acted decisively on her behalf by giving her children. God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17).

Psalms 116:5, “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”



The expression “the LORD saw” often is used in the Old Testament of the Lord acting decisively, often for the weak and oppressed (cf. 6:5; 7:1; 18:21; 31:12; Ex. 2:25; 4:31).

“Unloved” is the verb *sane* (an@c*) (saw-nay), which means, “hate” in the sense that Jacob rejected Leah as the sole object of all his love and affection and loved her less than Rachel. The word does “not” mean that he was hostile and antagonistic towards her or was cold, and indifferent towards her since Genesis 29:30 records that Jacob “loved Rachel more than Leah” indicating that Jacob did have love for Leah but it wasn’t as intense as his love for Rachel.

Genesis 29:32

“Leah conceived and bore a son and named him Reuben, for she said, ‘Because the LORD has seen my affliction; surely now my husband will love me.’”

The first child that Leah bore to Jacob was “Reuben” (/b@Wār+) (*r^e’uven*) (reh-oo-vane), whose name means, “behold or see, a son.”

In the Hebrew, the name “Reuben” honors the Lord and is a play on the consonants of the name having a similar sound to the Hebrew for “He (the Lord) looked (with concern) on my misery.”

Leah recognized the grace of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and hoped that Jacob would recognize the Lord’s hand in this and that her bearing a son would not only raise her in Jacob’s esteem but also cause him to love her but it did not.

“The Lord has seen my affliction” echoes the similar remark made by Hagar recorded in Genesis 16:13, “You are a God who sees (my affliction).”

Leah’s firstborn Reuben, like all children, was a gift from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Genesis 29:33

“Then she conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this son also.’” So she named him Simeon.”

The second child that Leah bore to Jacob was “Simeon” (/w)um+v!) (*shim`on*) (shim-one), whose name means, “the Lord has heard.”

The name “Simeon” in the Hebrew is from “the Lord has heard that am hated,” which echoes the similar remark made by the Lord to Hagar

recorded in Genesis 16:11, “the LORD has given heed to your affliction.””

The first two names of Leah’s children replicate a pair of verbs (“to see” and “to hear”) express the Lord’s providential concern and care for the unfortunate.

Genesis 29:34

“She conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons.’ Therefore he was named Levi.”

The third child that Leah bore to Jacob was “Levi” (yvw!!@) (*lewi*) (lay-vee), whose name means, “attached, joined.” This name is from “My husband will be attached to me.” In spite of the Lord bestowing His grace upon her in giving her a third child, Leah does not have her hope realized and must learn to find her emotional fulfillment in her relationship with the Lord. This child would be a blessing since the Aaronic priestly line in Israel and the tribe of Levi who ministered in the music and worship of the Temple were descended from Leah.

Genesis 29:35

“And she conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘This time I will praise the LORD.’ Therefore she named him Judah. Then she stopped bearing.”

The fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob was “Judah” (hd*Why+) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw), whose name means, “I will praise the Lord.” By naming this fourth child *y^ehudhah*, “Judah,” Leah is again honoring the Lord and expressing the fact that she is able to transcend her distress that her husband Jacob does not prefer her over Rachel. This child would be a blessing since King David and the Lord Jesus Christ would descend from the tribe of Judah.

Hebrews 7:14, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.”

Though Leah was not the sole object of Jacob’s affections, the Lord blessed her in the sense that He gave her the privilege of being the mother of Jacob’s first four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah who was the ancestor of David and the Lord Jesus.

Levi’s descendants were given the honor of being the priestly tribe in Israel whereas King David and the Lord Jesus Christ were both from the tribe of Judah.

Each of the names of her first four children honor the Lord and express the depth of her pain as being the rejected and not the preferred woman in Jacob’s life.

Leah names three of her first four children in honor of the Lord (29:32-33, 35) and by giving these names she confesses her faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the gods of her father Laban.

The Lord permitted Leah to remain in this difficult marriage situation with Jacob in order to test her faith.

Jeremiah 20:12, “Yet, O LORD of hosts, You who test the righteous, who see the mind and the heart.”

The faith of Leah was tested in order to produce endurance in her.

James 1:2-4, “Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

The Lord rewarded the faith of Leah by giving her children and a more intimate fellowship with Himself, which was much more important than her relationship with her husband Jacob.

James 1:12, “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

Proverbs 8:17, “I love those who love me; And those who diligently seek me will find me.”

Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek Me and find Me when you search for Me with all your heart.”

The Lord permitted Leah to remain in this difficult marriage in order to teach her about perseverance in prayer, which is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances.

Matthew 7:7, “Ask repeatedly, and it will be given to you; seek repeatedly, and you will find; knock repeatedly, and it will be opened to you.”

The faith of Leah in praying for a child demonstrates the spiritual principle that you appropriate the omnipotence of God by operating in faith.

Matthew 17:20, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

The fact that Leah was permitted by the Lord to remain in this difficult marriage with Jacob was to demonstrate His power in her weakness and suffering.

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself!”

“Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.”

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Therefore, if you are in a difficult marriage or you are not married and yet desire to be married or you are childless and want to have children, the Lord has permitted you to remain in your circumstances in order to demonstrate His power in your human weakness and give you a more intimate fellowship with Himself.

Genesis 30

Genesis 30 continues the story of the birth of Jacob's children, which began in Genesis 29:31 and ends in Genesis 30:24.

As we noted in Genesis 29, Genesis 29:31-30:24 is basically a study of love, sex, marriage and children and sounds like a “soap opera,” with Jacob hopping from bedroom to bedroom and his wives competing with each other for his love and affection. Unlike today's modern soap operas on television, the soap opera found in Genesis 29:31-30:24 is not designed to entertain us or encourage us to sin but rather, quite the opposite, it is designed to encourage us to live righteously before the Lord.

In Genesis 29:31-35, we saw Leah bearing Jacob four sons whose names are Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.

In Genesis 30:1-8, we have Rachel's maid Bilhah bearing Jacob two more sons, Dan and Naphtali.

Genesis 30:1

“Now when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she became jealous of her sister; and she said to Jacob, ‘Give me children, or else I die.’”

“Jealous” is the verb *qana* (אנ*ק*) (kaw-naw), and to be “jealous” is to desire to have the same or the same sort of thing for oneself and so therefore, Rachel is jealous of Leah in the sense that she desires to have children just like Leah.

Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another's success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.

Rachel was jealous of Leah in the sense that she desired to have children like her and was resentful and intolerant and suspicious of Leah and her success having children and she was also guarded over her relationship with Jacob and did not tolerate Leah and considered her a rival.

Jealousy is included in the list of sins produced by the old sin nature in both the believer and unbeliever (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1).

Rachel was not satisfied with Jacob's love and affection and attention and wanted sons just as Leah was having them. She blames Jacob for her problem of not being able to get pregnant since she

fails to understand that children are a gift from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

The Lord had prevented her from getting pregnant in order to test her faith and to teach her perseverance and produce endurance in her (See Jeremiah 20:12; James 1:2-4).

Rachel is impatient with the Lord and the fact that Rachel gives Jacob her maid Bilhah demonstrates that she is not operating in faith at this point.

The Lord prevented Jacob from having children with Rachel in order to teach them about perseverance in prayer, which is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances (See Matthew 7:7).

At this point in the narrative, Rachel is not persevering in prayer but is taking things into her own hands and trying to solve her problems independently of the Lord.

The fact that Rachel was barren gave the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate His power in her life (See Jeremiah 32:27).

Rachel’s demand of Jacob that he give her children reveals that Jacob has been reduced to a stud in the rivalry between Rachel and Leah.

Her statement “I’ll die” expresses her extreme grief over the matter of being childless. Even though she is the object of Jacob’s love and affection and attention, she does not consider life worth living without children. Ironically, she dies giving birth to Benjamin (See Genesis 35:16-19).

The sight of Leah’s children filled Rachel with jealousy. Rachel’s jealousy of her sister Leah is rooted in her social disgrace as a barren wife.

Gordon J. Wenham, “It was a serious matter for a man to be childless in the ancient world, for it left him without an heir. But it was even more calamitous for a woman: to have a great brood of children was the mark of success as a wife; to have none was ignominious failure” (Word Biblical Commentary series, Genesis 15—50; Waco: Word Books, 1994).

She wants to gain respect and publicly to validate her marriage to Jacob.

Ironically, Rachel is jealous of a sister who has been pawned off to a husband who does not love her exclusively. Each woman wants what the other has and neither treasures what she has been given for its own value.

Rachel’s demand of Jacob to give her children is ridiculous since he has proven himself to be fertile in that he has fathered four boys with Leah at this time. It is also unreasonable since the Lord must enable Rachel to get pregnant and He has not seen fit to do so at this time in her life for reasons we have noted earlier.

Genesis 30:2

“Then Jacob's anger burned against Rachel, and he said, ‘Am I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?’”

Jacob deals with Rachel’s impatience by being impatient with her. Jacob’s anger is not justified and therefore, is not “righteous indignation” as the Lord Jesus Christ displayed with the Pharisees in calling them “hypocrites” and “white washed sepulchers that are filled with dead men’s’ bones” (See Matthew 23:13-29).

Even though Jacob’s response to Rachel’s demands is accurate theologically, it was misapplied and was motivated out of frustration, impatience with her and a lack of compassion for her situation rather than love. Jacob’s response is a classic example of a believer “not” speaking truth in love to someone.

Ephesians 4:25, “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.”

His response demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to Rachel’s situation of not having children, which as we noted was calamitous for a woman in the ancient world and brought on public ridicule from other women. Jacob should have been compassionate towards her by offering words of encouragement and speaking truth to her in love and not in frustration.

Colossians 3:12-13, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one

another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

Unlike his father Isaac who interceded in prayer for his wife Rebekah to get pregnant, Jacob does not follow his example demonstrating that he is a spiritual child at this time.

Genesis 30:3

“She said, ‘Here is my maid Bilhah, go in to her that she may bear on my knees, that through her I too may have children.’”

Rachel deals with her problem of being barren just as Sarah dealt with the same problem, namely, by employing a concubine. Just as Sarah resorted to a custom acceptable in her culture, though contrary to God's will, to secure an heir for Abraham (cf. 16:1-2) so Rachel does the same in order to secure a child for Jacob.

On the contrary, Isaac prayed that God would open Rebekah's womb and waited (25:21). Rachel and Jacob followed the example of Sarah and Abraham.

The people in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob's culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife so in effect Bilhah became Jacob's concubine. Not only was using a concubine an option, but in Hurrian culture husbands sometimes required that if their wife could not bear children she had to provide a concubine for him. This custom helps explain why Jacob was willing to be a part of Rachel's plan that seems so unusual to us and though using a woman other than one's wife was a custom of the day it was never God's desire (2:24; Matt. 19:4-5).

Rachel is not trusting in the Lord at this point in the narrative since she chooses to solve her problem of being barren by following the custom of the cosmic system of Satan in that day in offering her maid Bilhah to Jacob in order to produce children for her.

Psalm 27:14, “Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.”

Rachel's command “go in to her” is a euphemism for sexual intercourse and demonstrates that Rachel was demanding immediate action from

Jacob and was “wearing the pants” in the marriage and was out of the will of God since the wife's responsibility is to be obedient to her husband (Eph. 5:22-25; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1-7).

At this point in the narrative, Rachel is a contentious woman.

Proverbs 25:24, “It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.”

The phrase “that she may bear on my knees” signifies that the child that Bilhah will bear for Jacob will be adopted by Rachel as her child.

Nahum Sarna commenting on this expression makes the following comment: “The key to this phrase lies in a symbolic gesture, widely attested in Near Eastern sources, especially Hittite, as well as in the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. The placing or reception of a child on or by the knees of another signifies legitimation, whether in acknowledgement of physical parenthood or by adoption. This practice is again referred to in the Bible in Genesis 48:12 and 50:23 and in Job 3:12. Its origin is in the idea of the knee as the seat of generative power” (The JPS Torah Commentary, pages 207-208, The Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 30:4, “So she gave him her maid Bilhah as a wife, and Jacob went in to her.”

The statement “Jacob went in to her (Bilhah)” reveals that Jacob had failed not only spiritually by operating in unbelief but also failed in his authority in the marriage as Rachel's husband. His response should have been no and he should have explained to Rachel in love that the Lord would give her a child in His timing.

Notice that Jacob and Rachel are never said to consult the Lord in prayer because they have decided to take things into their own hands.

Genesis 30:4 records that Rachel gave Bilhah to Jacob “as a wife” whereas Genesis 35:22 describes Bilhah as Jacob's “concubine.” This apparent contradiction is reconciled when we understand that a concubine was considered in Abraham's day to be a “second-class wife,” acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights.

In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be sent away with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

Genesis 30:5

“Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son.”

Genesis 30:6

“Then Rachel said, ‘God has vindicated me, and has indeed heard my voice and has given me a son.’ Therefore she named him Dan.”

Rachel’s use of the term *Elohim*, “God” demonstrates her awareness that God has sovereignly intervened in her life by enabling Bilhah her maid to get pregnant by Jacob.

Rachel’s idea worked according to plan and Bilhah conceived and bore a son who Rachel named “Dan.” The name “Dan” (/D*) (dawn) means, “God has vindicated me.”

Notice that Rachel does not consider the birth of Dan merely as a blessing from the Lord but rather as the justice due her as a hopeless victim. On the surface, it appears that Rachel is spiritual by giving credit to God for Bilhah’s pregnancy but in reality Rachel is using the Lord’s name in vain since the use of concubines by God’s people to solve barrenness in contrast to waiting on God is never authorized by God. She ascribes the success of her plot to God, but in reality God did not give her the child based on her prayer but rather He gave her the child as a result of his permissive will since the directive will of God rules out concubines but the permissive will permitted the birth of this child.

How could God bless the ugly vindication of a jealous woman over her sister? Rachel must have had very little idea Who she was talking about.

She says that the birth of Dan was an answer to prayer but she is in error since God would never answers a prayer that is against His will and Rachel’s use of a concubine rather than waiting on God to solve her problem of barrenness was against the will of God (See 1 John 5:14; James 4:3).

Genesis 30:7

“Rachel’s maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son.”

Genesis 30:8

“So Rachel said, ‘With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and I have indeed prevailed.’ And she named him Naphtali.”

The name “Naphtali” explains Rachel’s naming of the first child “Dan,” which means, “God has vindicated me.” The name “Naphtali” (y!lT*p+n^)(naf-taw-lee) means, “my wrestling” indicates that Rachel viewed her relationship with her sister Leah to be like a wrestling match.

“With my wrestlings I have wrestled” in the Hebrew text literally reads “wrestlings with God, I have wrestled (with my sister)” since the Hebrew contains the noun *naphulim*, “wrestlings,” which is followed by the noun *Elohim*, “God” and the verb *pathal*, “to wrestle.”

Rachel’s statement means that she wrestled in prayer with God to give her a child through Bilhah in order to be victorious over Leah.

Of course, God did not give Bilhah a child based on Rachel’s prayer because it was offered with wrong motivation and was against His will but rather God gave Bilhah a child based upon His permissive will. The statement made by Rachel on the occasion of the birth of Bilhah’s second son is reflective of her true spiritual state at this time since it appears that she saw herself in a great wrestling match, not with God, but with her sister.

She states that she has triumphed over Leah by Bilhah giving birth to Naphtali. This is a ridiculous statement by Rachel since how can two adopted sons win out over four of Leah’s sons? Therefore, Rachel’s statement in Genesis 30:8 indicates that she erroneously believed that God was on her side with the birth of these two boys, Dan and Naphtali and has given her the victory over her sister Leah.

Genesis 30:9-13 presents the record of Leah’s maid Zilpah bearing two more children for Jacob, namely, Gad and Asher.

Genesis 30:9

“When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took her maid Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife.”

Rachel’s victory is short-lived. Anything that Rachel does, Leah seeks to do better. It is tit for tat with these two. Leah has lowered herself to the level of Rachel. She is now seeking revenge against Rachel and is therefore sinning and out of fellowship at this point in her life.

The rivalry between Rachel and Leah escalates as Leah gives Jacob her maid Zilpah as a concubine in response to Rachel giving Bilhah as a concubine for Jacob. There was no need for Leah to do this since she already had four children of her own with Jacob. There was no need to give her maid Zilpah to Jacob for a wife. Other than the fact that this was what Rachel had done.

If Rachel can employ her maid in this contest, Leah feels that so can she. The situation has completely gotten out of hand now. Jacob could have found an excuse to accept Bilhah from Rachel, but there is none for his taking Zilpah. He must have known that he was the tool of his wives’ jealousy, but evidently he does not care.

Through Zilpah, Gad and Asher are added to the family. Leah seems to have given up on God now. While she praised the Lord at the birth of Judah, she does not ascribe the birth of Gad to divine intervention.

Just as Bilhah was a concubine so is Zilpah.

Genesis 30:10

“Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son.”

Genesis 30:11

“Then Leah said, ‘How fortunate!’ So she named him Gad.”

The name “Gad” (dG*) (gawd) comes from “What good fortune” and indicates that Leah attributes this child to fortune or good luck rather than God.

Genesis 30:12

“Leah’s maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son.”

Genesis 30:13

“Then Leah said, ‘Happy am I! For women will call me happy.’ So she named him Asher.”

The name “Asher” (rv^a*) (aw-share) is from “women will call me happy” and indicates that Leah thinks she is to be envied by other women. The name of this child demonstrates that Leah’s happiness is based upon her success over her sister Rachel.

Leah’s speech betrays her here. Not once is God mentioned. In the heat of this battle between two wives, little thought is given to the ethics of their actions, only to the expected results. She who previously had viewed her children as a gift from the Lord now sees these sons as merely good fortune—“How lucky I am,” “How fortunate,” and “How happy am I.” Devotion to the Lord has been thrown to the wind by Leah. The focus of her thinking has shifted from God’s estimation of her actions to the praise she would be given by other women (verse 13).

In Genesis 30:14-21, we have Leah bearing Jacob two more sons, namely, Issachar and Zebulun and a daughter whose name was Dinah.

Genesis 30:14

“Now in the days of wheat harvest Reuben went and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, ‘Please give me some of your son’s mandrakes.’”

Genesis 30:15

“But she said to her, ‘Is it a small matter for you to take my husband? And would you take my son’s mandrakes also?’ So Rachel said, ‘Therefore he may lie with you tonight in return for your son’s mandrakes.’”

The Gezer calendar gives us insight as to when the wheat harvest took place. The Gezer calendar dating about 925 B.C was discovered by R. A. S. Macalister in his excavations at Gezer, which guarded the primary route into the Israelite hill country and was one of the most strategic cities in the Canaanite and Israelite periods. Gezer is a prominent 33-acre site that overlooked the Aijalon Valley and the road leading through it to Jerusalem. The Gezer calendar reveals that the wheat harvest took place from mid-April to mid-

May. Therefore, during the spring time, Genesis 30:14 records the oldest son of Leah and Jacob roaming the fields and finding some mandrakes for his mother.

The fact that he is roaming the fields alone indicates that Reuben is old enough to be left alone and he must have been somewhere between six and ten years of age.

“Mandrakes” is the noun *dudha'im* (<ya!d*WD) (doo-dah-ee), which were plants common to southern Palestine and other areas of the world and were used as an aphrodisiac in the ancient world and were thought to promote fertility.

The mandrake has been called the “love-apple” and in the West, the “May-apple.” Mandrakes are from the nightshade family, the mandrakes leaves are dark green and the flowers are purple or greenish yellow. The plant bears a reddish or orange colored fruit that resembles a small tomato and which has a strong smell and sweet, though poisonous, taste.

The mandrake is grown in fields and rough ground of Palestine and the Mediterranean region and is reputed to have emetic, purgative, narcotic qualities. Its fruit exudes a heady, distinctive fragrance.

Mandrakes can interfere with the transmission of nerve impulses and the ancient world considered the plant an aphrodisiac and was thought to promote fertility. The plant’s thick root is often forked with extra side roots giving the appearance of arms and legs.

Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty and sex, was called “Lady of the Mandrake.”

In Song of Solomon 7:10-13 the female spouse enticed her husband to lovemaking by describing the preparations she had made, including the pleasant fragrance of the mandrake.

Song of Solomon 7:13, “The mandrakes have given forth fragrance; And over our doors are all choice fruits, both new and old, which I have saved up for you, my beloved.”

Therefore, Genesis 30:14 records Jacob and Leah’s oldest son Reuben roaming the fields in the spring time during the wheat harvest and coming

upon the mandrake, whose leaves and fruit would be appealing to the eye of a child.

Reuben’s innocent discovery of an ancient “love-producing potion” provided the occasion for another confrontation and contest between Jacob’s two wives, Rachel and Leah. When Rachel sees that Reuben has found some mandrakes that were considered an aphrodisiac and fertility drug in her day, she requests the mandrakes thinking they would solve her problem of infertility.

Leah’s strong retort reminds us that, in her mind, it was Rachel who had stolen her husband from her. She viewed herself as Jacob’s legitimate wife rather than Rachel, who was merely his romantic preference.

Rachel proposed an exchange with Leah, believing that the mandrakes would enable her to get pregnant. Leah exploited Rachel’s desperate desire to get pregnant by offering to give her the mandrakes in exchange for a night with Jacob.

The expression “lie with you” is a euphemism of sexual intercourse. The fact that Rachel was willing to make such an offer with Leah reveals how much Jacob favors her over Leah in that she is prepared trade a night of sex with Jacob for the mandrakes, which she hopes will enable her to conceive. It also reveals how desperate Rachel is to have children in that she would make a deal with Leah, exchanging a night of sex with Jacob for the mandrakes.

Leah’s response is not recorded indicating that she grudgingly agrees to Rachel’s proposal, which backfires on Rachel since Leah conceives again. Also, the fact that Rachel could make a proposal to Leah, exchanging a night with Jacob for the mandrakes indicates that Rachel was deciding which of Jacob’s wives or concubines would sleep with him on any given night. Rachel is again demonstrating a lack of faith in the Lord who alone can cause women to conceive.

The fact that Rachel believes that the mandrakes will enable her to conceive and have a child indicates that she still is not free from her pagan background since only the Lord can enable her to have children. Rachel was so lacking in faith that she put her trust in mandrakes rather than the God Who made them.

Genesis 30:16

“When Jacob came in from the field in the evening, then Leah went out to meet him and said, ‘You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes.’ So he lay with her that night.”

Outside of the home of Jacob, Laban has degraded Jacob to a shepherd under contract to him and now inside his own home, this has taken place.

This is actually the fourth exchange that has taken place in the life of Jacob: (1) Exchange of birthright with Esau for a bowl of red lentil soup (2) Exchange of blessing (3) Exchange of wives, Rachel and Leah (4) Exchange of Jacob as a husband between Rachel and Leah for sex by hire.

In the first two exchanges, Jacob is the victimizer but in the last two, he is the victim.

Leah's statement to Jacob “I have surely hired you” indicates that Jacob has been reduced to a “stud for hire.”

The expression “He lay with her” is a euphemism of sexual intercourse.

“Lay” is the verb *shakhav* (bk^v*) (shaw-kahv), which is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex: Lot's daughters with Lot (19:32-35); the Philistines with Rebekah (26:10); Shechem with Dinah (34:2, 7); Reuben with Bilhah (35:22); Potiphar's wife with Joseph (39:7, 10, 12, 14).

We can be sure that Jacob not only accepted the offer because of the sex involved but also to keep the peace in his own home.

Genesis 30:17

“God gave heed to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son.”

The statement “God gave heed to Leah” emphasizes the omnipotence of God indicating that God alone enabled Leah to get pregnant, and thus dismisses the notion that such pagan superstitions about the mandrakes have any validity.

Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

Psalm 113:9, “He makes the barren woman abide in the house as a joyful mother of children. Praise the LORD!”

Genesis 30:14-16 clearly reveals that Rachel placed her faith in the pagan superstition about the mandrakes whereas Leah placed her faith in God. Remember, the mandrakes were thought to enable barren women to get pregnant, which would draw the interest of Rachel who was barren whereas the mandrakes were also an aphrodisiac, which would have attracted a woman like Leah who was looking for ways to attract Jacob. Rachel embraced the pagan superstition about the mandrakes and Leah did not.

Rachel's faith in the pagan superstition about the mandrakes is indicated by the fact that she was willing to exchange a night with Jacob for the mandrakes in the hopes that the mandrakes would help her get pregnant. On the other hand, Leah placed her faith in God, which is indicated by the statement that “God gave heed to Leah,” implying that Leah prayed to God to enable her to get pregnant.

The fact that God is said to have given heed to Leah clearly implies that she prayed to get pregnant by Jacob again and God answered her. The fact that Leah placed her trust in God to enable her to get pregnant whereas Rachel placed her faith in a pagan superstition is another indication that Leah and not Rachel was Jacob's right woman.

Genesis 30:18

“Then Leah said, ‘God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband.’ So she named him Issachar.”

Leah's use of the term *Elohim*, “God” emphasizes the omnipotence of God and demonstrates her awareness that God alone has enabled her to get pregnant again and not the mandrakes.

The noun *Elohim*, “God” emphasizes to the reader that God is omnipotent or all-powerful and is able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place.

The name “Issachar” (rk*CC*y!) (yis-saw-kawr) means, “reward.”

Leah's statement "God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband" indicates that she views Issachar's birth as a reward for her giving Zilpah to Jacob. This statement implies that she viewed this as a costly sacrifice, though at the time the births of Gad and Asher were joyful occasions. She has misinterpreted the reason why God enabled her to get pregnant.

Leah's has erroneously interpreted the meaning of her fifth son since the birth of Issachar was a gift of God's grace and a demonstration of His compassion in response to her adverse circumstances. Leah erroneously chose to interpret this son as evidence of God's approval and blessing of her giving her maid Zilpah to Jacob. In actuality, God "rewarded" Leah's faith in Him. Therefore, God in His grace heard Leah's prayer for a child and rewarded her faith in Him by giving her another son by Jacob.

Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon on our faith in the merits of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

Genesis 30:19

"Leah conceived again and bore a sixth son to Jacob."

Genesis 30:20

"Then Leah said, 'God has endowed me with a good gift; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons.' So she named him Zebulun."

Leah's statement that "God has endowed me with a good gift" expresses her acknowledgment that God alone by means of His omnipotence has empowered her to get pregnant and bear another child and that this child is a gift from Him.

"Dwell" is the verb *zaval* (lb^z*) (zaw-val), which does "not" mean, "to dwell" with someone but rather means, "to honor in the sense of acknowledging (a woman) as one's lawful wife" thus indicating that Leah thought that the birth of Zebulun would cause Jacob to honor her as the sole object of his love and affection.

Leah bore Jacob a sixth son who she named "Zebulun" (/l%WbW+) (zeb-oo-loon) whose name means, "honor" as indicated by the verb

zaval, "to honor in the sense of acknowledging (a woman) as one's lawful wife and sole object of one's love and affection."

Genesis 30:21

"Afterward she bore a daughter and named her Dinah."

Dinah is the seventh child that Leah bore to Jacob and only girl. The name "Dinah" (hn*yD!) (deenaw) means, "judgment" since the name is the feminine form of the word *din* (/yD!) (deen) meaning "judgment."

The record of Dinah's birth is intended to introduce her to us in preparation for the tragic events of Genesis 34 where she is raped by Shechem who was the son of Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land (See Genesis 34:2). Jacob did not have other daughters besides Dinah (cf. 37:35 and 46:7) since the term "daughters" can be used to describe a "granddaughter" and not just a "daughter."

In Genesis 46:7-19, the term "daughters" is used with reference to Jacob's "granddaughters" and not to other daughters besides Dinah since Dinah is singled out as being his only daughter and the daughters of Jacob's son are listed.

Genesis 30:22-24 completes the section of the book of Genesis containing the record of the birth of Jacob's children, and which section began in Genesis 29:31. In this passage we will see the Lord remembering Rachel and enabling her to finally bear Jacob a boy who they named Joseph.

Genesis 30:22

"Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb."

When Genesis 30:22 says that "God remembered Rachel" it does "not" mean that He had forgotten her but rather it signifies that God according to His timetable is about to act on Rachel's behalf by giving her the capacity to get pregnant.

The framework of the story of Jacob's children implies that Rachel had to wait at least seven years after marrying Jacob to bear her first child and fourteen years since their betrothal (See Genesis 29:18, 27).

The statement “God remembered Rachel” expresses the Lord’s compassion towards Rachel and that He acted decisively on her behalf by giving her a child. God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17).

Exodus 33:18, 19

“Then Moses said, ‘I pray You, show me Your glory!’

“And He said, ‘I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.’”

Psalm 116:5, “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”

The statement “God gave heed to her (Rachel)” implies that Rachel prayed to God to enable her to get pregnant and expresses her faith in God. At this point in her life, Rachel stopped trusting in the pagan superstition that mandrakes could get her pregnant and instead trusted in God who honored her faith in Him by answering her prayer for a child of her own. After all of Rachel’s devices and schemes have been exhausted, God grants her the desire of her heart.

Psalm 37:4-5, “Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.”

Rachel’s prayer for a child was successful because she offered it in faith. Faith is bringing our fears and weaknesses to God and believing that somehow God will transform our pain into a moment of grace. The fulfillment of one’s prayer requests demands faith (Mt. 17:20; Jam. 5:15).

Hebrews 11:6, “And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.”

The faith of Rachel in praying for a child demonstrates the spiritual principle that you appropriate the omnipotence of God by operating in faith.

Matthew 17:20, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

The fact that Rachel was barren gave the Lord an opportunity to demonstrate His power in her life.

Jeremiah 32:27, “Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”

The fact that Rachel’s prayer for a child was answered and solved her problem of infertility teaches that prayer solves problems (Kgs. 17:1; cf. 18:36-46; Acts 12:1-17; Phlp. 4:6).

Genesis 30:23

“So she conceived and bore a son and said, ‘God has taken away my reproach.’”

Rachel’s statement that “God has taken away my reproach” reveals that in her day it was calamitous for a woman to be childless and marked her as an ignominious failure in the eyes of others.

Genesis 30:24

“She named him Joseph, saying, ‘May the LORD give me another son.’”

The name “Joseph” ([s@w)y) (yoseph) literally means, “He adds,” which is a play on the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*), “to add” and is also a prayer for another child, foreshadowing the birth of Benjamin.

Rachel refers to God with the personal covenant name of God *Yahweh* (hw *hy+), “Lord,” which emphasizes the “immanency” of God who intervened in the life of Rachel providing her with a child in order to fulfill His covenant promises to Jacob.

Up to this point in Genesis 30, the term *Elohim*, “God” has been used exclusively and not the covenant name of God *Yahweh*, “Lord” in order to emphasize the omnipotence of God which enabled Rachel and Leah to conceive and bear children for Jacob in fulfillment of His covenant promise to Jacob to give him numerous progeny.

The fact that Rachel refers to God with the covenant name of God, *Yahweh* indicates that she is a believer.

1 Corinthians 12:3b, "No one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit."

The jealousy, bickering, superstition, and weak faith demonstrated by Jacob and his wives Rachel and Leah stand out in Genesis 29:31-30:24. God's gift of children was gracious since He gave them in spite of, rather than because of, the behavior of the parents, which Rachel acknowledged finally as did Jacob.

This account of the origin of the twelve tribes of Israel must have proved to be most humbling to the nation of Israel who first read the book of Genesis since it was hardly a story which would have inspired national pride. This story would serve to remind them that their "roots" were no basis for pride whatsoever. They must never trust in their heritage, as the Jews of Jesus' day did (cf. John 8:33, 39), but in the God of their heritage. This is why God instructed them to recite their origins at the presentation of the first-fruits: Deuteronomy 26:5, "You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation.'"

Now I'd like to extrapolate several principles from Genesis 29:31-30:24, which pertain to love, sex, marriage, and children.

(1) The propaganda of Satan's cosmic system has promoted the lie that wealth, good environment, sex, marriage, having children, approbation from men will produce true enduring happiness, contentment and fulfillment in life.

Satan's propaganda machine promotes the lie that good circumstances and people are the basis for happiness, but God's Word states that true happiness is based upon a relationship and fellowship with God for the purpose of doing the Father's will.

True enduring happiness and contentment and fulfillment in life is produced in our lives by the Holy Spirit when we obey the Father's will and appropriate by faith the teaching of the Spirit in the Word of God that we have been crucified, died, buried, raised and seated with Christ (See Romans 6; Ephesians 2:1-10).

Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."

Money, good environment, sex, marriage, having children, approbation from men can never produce true enduring happiness, contentment and fulfillment in life because all of these things are temporal and are passing away but he who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:15-17

"Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

"The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever."

(2) Sex, love, marriage, and family can never be fully satisfying unless enjoyed within the confines of the will of God and the Word of God.

Love, sex, marriage, and family are all gifts from a good and loving God, but their enjoyment cannot be complete apart from fellowship with Him.

Now, when I speak of love here I'm referring to a personal love and affection between a man and a woman, which the Greek's referred to with the verb *phileo*. In fact, the Greeks and even the New Testament writers used different words to denote the concept, which is called "love" in our day and age.

The Greek's used four different verbs to denote the concept of "love": (1) *Erao* (e)ravw (verb), "to love passionately, to desire, to yearn" (2) *Stergo* (stergwv) (verb), "to affectionately love parents or children" (3) *Phileo* (filevw) (verb), "to personally love friends or family members" (4) *Agapao* (a)gapavw (verb), "to be satisfied with, to honor, to receive, to greet, to prefer."

The verb *erao* (e)ravw and the noun *eros* denote a "possessive" love between a man and a woman,

which involves longing, craving, and sexual desire.

Stergo means, “to feel affection” and is used especially of the mutual love of parents and children and can also be used of the love of a people for their ruler, the love of tutelary god for the people and even of dogs for their master.

The verb *phileo* denotes the affection and attraction of people towards one another who are close together both inside and outside the family and it includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of.

There are many usages of *phileo* in the Greek New Testament.

Matthew 10:37, “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”

1 Corinthians 16:22, “If anyone does not love the Lord, he is to be accursed. Maranatha.”

The verb *agapao* is often used in the classical Greek to denote friendship between equals, or sometimes sympathy. Sometimes *agapao* took on the meaning of “to prefer, to set one good or aim above another, to prioritize, to esteem one person more highly than another.”

The noun *eros* was a general love of the world seeking to satisfy itself wherever it can thus making no distinctions, whereas *agape* made distinctions, choosing and keeping its object. *Eros* is determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion towards its object, whereas *agape* is a free and decisive act determined by its subject. *Eros* was a self-serving love, whereas *agape* was a giving love for the benefit of another.

In the Greek New Testament the noun *agape* was used of a love that originates in the essence of God and is thus divine in character.

1 John 4:7-8, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

The verb *phileo* must have an attractive object to love whereas *agapao* does not need an attractive

object to love since it is based upon the integrity of the subject rather than the attractiveness of the object.

John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”

The world was obnoxious and unattractive to God because of sin and rebellion against Him, but God was able to love the world from His own integrity.

The verb *phileo* denoted a personal selfish love and affection for someone, whereas the verb *agapao* on the other hand denoted a selfless love that was loyal to the point of self-sacrifice for another.

Jacob was an individual who not only had a *phileo* love for Rachel but an *eros* love as well, which is normal between married people. However, Jacob chose Rachel as his wife strictly based upon an *eros* love and in fact, his marriage was driven by this and for marriage to endure and the marriage partners to grow in their relationship with each other there must be more than *eros* love.

In Christian marriage, there must not only be a *phileo* love and of course an *eros* love but there also must be an *agape* love as the foundation of the marriage for it to flourish because *agape* love is directly related to the Christian’s love for God and for the Christian loving others as God loves them.

(3) While *phileo* love without sex may be frustrating, sex without *phileo* love is folly.

This is a lesson which we learn from Jacob. Surely those years with Rachel where sex was not possible or permissible were frustrating (cf. Genesis 29:21), but sex without *phileo* love is just as bad. Jacob engaged in sex with his wife Leah, but there was no fulfillment in it but in fact, it degenerated to mere prostitution where Leah had to purchase his presence.

I feel that I must digress for a moment here on the relationship between sex and love, for this is not at all understood, even by Bible-believing Christians. It is said by some that “whoever” created men and women and sex must have been a very poor

engineer but we must remember men respond very quickly to physical stimuli and women do not.

Men reach the peak of their sexual desire earlier in life but women, later. Secular thinking would suppose that this is poor design and that man and woman should precisely correspond in these and other areas but I disagree. These differences are by design since God made man and woman distinctly different so that the ultimate in physical pleasure can only be obtained by a deliberate and conscious love which makes sacrifices of itself for the pleasure of the other. Without sacrifice, love-making deteriorates into mere self-seeking gratification at the expense of the other partner; therefore, love and sex must go together.

(4) Neither sex nor children can manufacture *phileo* love.

Leah would be quick to tell us that she learned no amount of sex could ever earn the love of her husband and even after six boys she was still not loved exclusively by Jacob.

Phileo love cannot be manufactured through sex since sex can only produce children, but it will never produce *phileo* love.

Many a couple with very serious marital problems have decided to have children in order to hold their marriage together, which does not work either since producing children, does not produce love.

(5) The one who places sex on an extremely high level of priority becomes its slave.

Jacob's love for Rachel was largely based upon an *eros* love, i.e. her physical attractiveness. Our society informs men and boys that their masculinity is largely indicated by the number of conquests they can make among women and so they think that the more women they bed, the more of a man they are. Jacob did rather well by these standards since he circulated among his four wives frequently enough to produce a growing family, but look at what happened to him in the process. Jacob was not the master of his harem, but he was mastered by his harem since he was pushed from bed to bed by his wives and he was purchased for the night. The passivity of Jacob in these verses is an indictment of his lack of leadership since he was a slave of sex and marriage, not its sovereign.

(6) Marriage cannot run for long on the fuel of *eros* love, i.e. physical attraction.

The love of Jacob for Rachel was primarily based on physical attraction. In the humdrum and pressures of married life, physical attraction is not sufficient to carry the relationship along for long. Jacob does not seem to have worked at deepening and broadening his love but instead it appears that his love was largely in the sphere of physical attraction. No wonder Rachel should look with jealous eyes at Leah and no wonder she seemed so threatened and desperate since she felt unloved, just as Leah did. Love needs to be meticulously maintained and vigorously strengthened.

(7) Physical attraction must never be the foundation of Christian marriage since it will fade with age.

(8) Personal love and affection must never be the foundation of Christian marriage since it can vacillate when the object of your personal love and affection becomes obnoxious to you or fails you in some way.

(9) The foundation of all Christian marriages must be the common eternal relationship with the Trinity through faith alone in Christ alone that exists between the two marriage partners and the love of God.

(10) Maturity, and sustaining and prospering as an individual and as a team in Christian marriage is based upon both partners experiencing fellowship with God on a habitual basis, which is accomplished by obeying the Spirit who speaks through the teaching of the Word of God.

In Genesis 30:25-34, we have the record of Jacob's proposal to Laban regarding flocks, which Laban agrees to. Genesis 30:35-36 records Laban's mistrust of Jacob. As we noted in Genesis 28:10-15, the Lord promised Jacob His presence and protection while he was in Paddan Aram.

In Genesis 29:31-30:24, we saw that the Lord has prospered Jacob in the sense that He has given him eleven sons and one daughter while in Paddan Aram. Therefore, in this passage, we see the Lord building Jacob's house but in Genesis 30:25-43, we see the Lord building Jacob's property.

Proverbs 27:23-27 teaches that one should prudently build up his property before his family, but Laban has prevented Jacob his own nephew from acting prudently.

Proverbs 27:23-27

“Know well the condition of your flocks, and pay attention to your herds; For riches are not forever, nor does a crown endure to all generations.”

“When the grass disappears, the new growth is seen, and the herbs of the mountains are gathered in, the lambs will be for your clothing, and the goats will bring the price of a field, and there will be goats' milk enough for your food, for the food of your household, and sustenance for your maidens.”

During the first seven years of their marriage contract, Laban should have allowed Jacob to prepare his own household but instead he left him with nothing.

Now we see in Genesis 30:25-43, Jacob building up his own property without the help of Laban.

Genesis 30:25-43 takes place over the last six years of Jacob's exile in Paddan Aram (See Genesis 31:41).

Genesis 30:25

“Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, ‘Send me away that I may go to my own place and to my own country.’”

Genesis 30:26

“Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you.”

Jacob requests that Laban let him leave and go back home to his father in Canaan since he has fulfilled his fourteen year marriage contract (See Genesis 29:41; 31:41). All told, Jacob will spend twenty years in Paddan Aram with Laban according to Genesis 31:38. Jacob worked seven years for Rachel but Laban deceived him and sent Leah into his tent on his wedding night (See Genesis 29:21-25).

After Jacob voiced his displeasure over Laban's deception, Laban proposed that Jacob work another seven years for Rachel, which he agreed to (See Genesis 29:26-30). So all told, Jacob worked fourteen years for both Leah and Rachel.

The conversation between Laban and Jacob that is recorded in Genesis 30:25-34 takes place after he has fulfilled the seven years of service to Laban to secure Rachel as his bride. Therefore, Jacob has been in Paddan Aram for fourteen years when the events of Genesis 30:25-43 are recorded.

Genesis 30:25 implies that Rachel gave birth to Joseph at the end of the fourteen years of Jacob's labor to Laban. Jacob had eleven sons at this time and one daughter, all of whom were born during the last seven years. Of course, the children were born of four different mothers (Leah, Bilhah, Rachel and Zilpah), but still it shows that the succession of births went much more rapidly than the story would suggest.

Now, that Jacob has fulfilled his contract with Laban, thus paying for his two wives, he then asks Laban to let him go home with his wives and children. As before, after the first seven years of service were concluded, it was Jacob who had to remind Laban of the agreement made. Just as Jacob had to remind Laban that it was time for him to fulfill his end of the contract and give Rachel to him as his wife (29:21) so Jacob must remind Laban again that he has fulfilled his end of the contract for Rachel and thus seeks his release so that he might return to his homeland and family.

Laban had not lost count but had intentionally not taken the initiative in reminding Jacob that his seven years of service for Rachel were concluded since he was not ready to let his son-in-law go because he recognizes that he has been blessed by God due to his association with Jacob according to Genesis 30:27.

Several factors would have contributed to Jacob's desire to leave. First, his attitude toward Laban would not have been positive at this point since Laban had deceived him by sending Leah and not Rachel into his tent on his wedding night, thus delaying his return to the land of Canaan seven years longer than he had expected. Undoubtedly, Jacob wanted to return home to his family.

Also, Jacob would be itching to leave Laban because the Lord had promised him that he would someday return to the land of Canaan (28:10-22). Jacob demands that Laban release to him his wives and children since he has fulfilled his end of the contract by paying the “bride-price” for both Leah and Rachel through his fourteen years of service for Laban as payment.

The “service” to which Jacob is referring to is of course, the fourteen years that he served Laban, which constituted the “bride-price” or the payment to secure both Leah and Rachel as his wives.

The “bride-price” refers to the compensation paid to the family of the bride for the loss of the bride’s presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to Laban’s family that both Leah and Rachel would be well cared for by Jacob.

The “bride-price” must not be confused with a “dowry,” since the latter was provided by the bride’s family whereas the former was provided by the groom.

Genesis 30:27

“But Laban said to him, ‘If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account.’”

Laban’s polite and flattering response to Jacob’s demands indicates that Laban acknowledges that indeed Jacob has fulfilled his responsibility in the contract to marry Rachel and Leah. Laban’s flattering response to Jacob’s demands reveals that Laban acknowledges that he has been blessed by the Lord due to his association with Jacob.

“I have divined” is the verb *nachash* (נָחַשׁ) (naw-khash), which does “not” mean “to practice divination,” since God would never communicate to Laban by this evil means.

Divination presumes that other spiritual forces control the world and are therefore not under God’s sovereign authority and was prohibited in Israel since it causes people to trust in evil demonic forces instead of trusting in God.

Leviticus 19:26, “You shall not eat anything with the blood, nor practice divination or soothsaying.”

Therefore, the context indicates that the verb *nachash* means that Laban “discerned through circumstances” that he had been prospered by God on account of Jacob since prior to Jacob’s arrival he had not been prospered.

Laban’s reference to God as *Yahweh*, “Lord,” was merely a case of Laban accommodating himself to Jacob’s references to God.

Just as the Philistine kings had to acknowledge God’s blessing on Abraham (21:22) and Isaac (26:28-29), so Laban has to acknowledge God’s blessing on Jacob and thus he has by association with Jacob, been blessed.

Genesis 30:28

“He continued, ‘Name me your wages, and I will give it.’”

Laban was willing to make almost any bargain with Jacob that would keep him working for him since he profited so much from Jacob. Seven years prior Laban let Jacob name his own wages and had gotten the better end of the bargain and now he does the same by letting Jacob name his own wages. All Jacob would have to do is name his price and Laban assured him that he would meet it, if Jacob would only keep working for him. Since Laban had no other daughters to offer Jacob, the agreement between himself and Jacob would have to be an actual payment of money or property. The latter of which they agree to, but of course later on we see that Laban had no intention to let Jacob leave with any property according to Genesis 31.

Laban’s statement “name your wages” reveals that he is always occupied with money and echoes the first deal that he made with Jacob and anticipates that he intends to deceive Jacob once again. This statement also indicates that Laban is proposing a change of status for Jacob, going from an indenture servant to a partner since he lets Jacob name his terms and yet it reveals that Laban views his relationship with Jacob on a purely economic level rather than a blood relationship.

The fact that Laban lets Jacob name his terms provides Jacob an opportunity to build his estate and provide for his family so that he does not leave for home penniless.

Genesis 30:29

“But he said to him, ‘You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me.’”

Genesis 30:30

“For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?”

The possession of livestock in the patriarchal period was a sign of wealth. The little Laban had has now multiplied because of Jacob’s service on behalf of him.

In Genesis 30:29-30, Jacob drives the point home to Laban that he had been prospered by the Lord because of being associated with him.

Jacob’s statement “you yourself know” emphasizes that Laban is well aware of the fact that he has been prospered by the Lord due to his association with Jacob since prior to his arrival in Paddan Aram, Laban was not prospering.

Jacob’s statement “the Lord has blessed you wherever I turned” means that Laban was blessed by association with him and is an expression of his humility in that he ascribes these blessings to God, acknowledging that the Lord has been fulfilling His promises to bless him while in exile (See Genesis 28:10-13). By making this statement Jacob is giving glory to God by bearing witness to Laban that the Lord is the cause of his increase in wealth and not himself. Though, Jacob states that he was faithful and honest in his service to Laban, he still points out to Laban that the Lord was the ultimate cause of his increase of livestock.

Now, in Genesis 30:31-33, Jacob names his terms.

Genesis 30:31

“So he said, ‘What shall I give you?’ And Jacob said, ‘You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock.’”

Laban’s question to Jacob, “what shall I give you” sounds reasonable but it is actually a question used to deceive Jacob since later on we see that Laban had no intention of letting Jacob leave with anything of his.

Jacob’s response to Laban’s question, “You shall not give me anything” reveals not only that he has learned by experience that the Lord would provide for him what he needed but also that Jacob did not wish to be indebted to Laban who he has learned through experience was a selfish, deceptive and wicked schemer.

Therefore, in Genesis 30:32-33, Jacob makes a proposition to Laban, which would give the Lord an opportunity to bless him materially as the Lord had blessed Laban materially through his association with Jacob.

This proposal would bring blessing to Jacob without taking anything belonging to Laban and thus would give God the glory and would also demonstrate Jacob’s great faith in the Lord.

Genesis 30:32

“let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages.”

Normally goats in that land were black or dark brown, seldom white or spotted with white (See Song of Solomon 4:1; 6:5) while sheep were nearly always white, infrequently black or spotted (See Song of Solomon 4:2; 6:6; Isaiah 1:18; Daniel 7:9). Jacob proposes that all speckled and spotted among the sheep and goats and the dark colored lambs was to be his wages and the pure white sheep, the dark goats were to be considered Laban’s property. Any spotted or speckled lambs or goats and dark colored sheep born in the future will be Jacob’s property.

The removal of these spotted and speckled lambs and goats and dark colored sheep would “not” later be considered Jacob’s property since he has already stipulated in Genesis 30:31 that he wants nothing that is Laban’s! Therefore, Jacob is not changing his mind but is referring to all “future” speckled or spotted lambs and goats and dark colored sheep, which would be his property and so he is actually proposing to start with nothing from the outset.

The removal of these spotted and speckled colored animals was to ensure that Jacob received nothing that was Laban’s. The agreement was solidified,

and the flocks were divided, with Jacob tending the white sheep and dark colored goats while Laban's sons would tend the speckled and spotted goats and sheep and black sheep that were removed from the flock and segregated from the flock that Jacob would be shepherding.

Undoubtedly, Laban expected Jacob to ask for a certain number of animals to begin his own flocks and herds but Jacob does the unexpected since he did not ask to take any property that was Laban's. Instead, Jacob proposes that he work for Laban to again supervise and shepherd his flocks and herds as he had been doing for the previous fourteen years. His pay would consist of only those animals yet unborn that would be less desirable to Laban because of their markings. Therefore, it would be entirely up to the Lord as to how many animals would become Jacob's.

Jacob's proposal put himself entirely at the mercy of the Lord and was a great act of faith in the Lord on his part.

Genesis 30:33

“So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen.”

Jacob also proposes that if anything appears in his flocks, which is not speckled or spotted among the goats or black among the lambs was to be considered as stolen by him and Laban could promptly remove it and claim it as his own.

So the issue will be clear-cut and deceit will be out of the question.

Genesis 30:34

“Laban said, ‘Good, let it be according to your word.’”

Laban agrees to Jacob's proposal without hesitation because he cannot see how he could possibly lose out and not profit from it. In fact, he would lose nothing of his flocks and it appeared from his human perspective that it was very unlikely that Jacob would acquire any future animals by this process either. Jacob would have no breeding stock of his own and none of the animals from which his pay was to come would be

likely to produce spotted and speckled progeny of their own without a spotted and speckled population with which to interbreed. The only way that Jacob could possibly succeed and prosper was if the Lord intervened for Jacob.

Genesis 30:35

“So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons.”

Genesis 30:36

“And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.”

Notice that Laban removes the “striped,” animals, which were not mentioned by Jacob but obviously were considered by Jacob to be included with the “speckled” and “spotted” animals.

Also, Laban removed all the animals “with white” on them, which were considered by Jacob to be included with the “speckled” and “spotted” animals.

Notice that Laban removes the striped and spotted animals from his flocks and the dark colored ones from among his sheep when Jacob is recorded in Genesis 30:32 as saying that he would do this himself. The fact that Laban removes these animals and does not allow Jacob to do so demonstrates his mistrust of Jacob.

Jacob's proposal was so unbelievably fantastic from Laban's point of view that he felt that there must be some catch to it. Laban's mistrust of Jacob is further manifested in that he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob because he wants to prevent Jacob from tampering with the animals that were removed from his flock.

Now, this mistrust of Jacob was not warranted since Jacob had never dealt falsely or deceitfully with Laban but rather this was a mistrust of a man who is himself not to be trusted. Therefore, Laban is projecting onto Jacob his deceitfulness and is insulting Jacob by demonstrating such a mistrust in him.

In Genesis 30:37-43, we see the Lord intervening in the life of Jacob rendering him justice for being mistreated by Laban for the past fourteen years by instructing him regarding selective breeding techniques among Laban's flocks, which produced for him numerous offspring.

Genesis 30:37

“Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods.”

“Rods” is the noun *maqel* (lQ!m^) (mak-kale), which is used of cut branches.

“Poplar” is the noun *livneh* (hn#b+!) (liv-neh), which refers to the storax tree and is a play upon Laban's name, which is *lavan*, “white.”

“Almond” is the noun *luz* (wWl) (looz), which was valued for the nut it bears, which is used not only for food but also to produce flavoring oil.

“Plane trees” is the noun *ermon* (/w)mr+u#) (ar-mone), which flourishes in wet areas and can grow to massive size, reaching sixty feet and the circumference of its trunk can become forty feet.

Genesis 30:38

“He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink.”

“Mated” is the verb *chamam* (sm^t) (khaw-mam), which means, “to be hot, to be in heat, to be aroused sexually.”

Genesis 30:39

“So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted.”

Genesis 30:40

“Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock.”

Genesis 30:41

“Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods.”

Genesis 30:42

“but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's.”

Genesis 30:43

“So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys.”

The selective breeding techniques employed by Jacob here in Genesis 30:37-43 are known today as “Mendelian genetics,” named after the Austrian botanist, Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) who made his experiments in the latter part of the nineteenth century regarding the laws of heredity. Of course, the Lord created these laws of heredity and revealed them to Jacob in a dream so that he could take advantage of these laws in breeding his flocks as we will note in Genesis 31:10-13.

“Under these laws of heredity, even though a species of animal may have certain ‘dominant’ traits such as the white color of sheep, there are, in each generation, certain individual animals that manifest one or more ‘recessive’ traits such as the brown color among the sheep. Actual physical vigor and usefulness for man's needs are quite independent of this matter of coloration. The Lord simply increased the statistical proportion of animals in future generations of Laban's flocks that would appear with these recessive traits. He knew that if Jacob would then use these for future breeding in the flock that this would increase their numbers. A certain proportion of the solid-colored animals he knew would be ‘homozygous’ and if mated with the other homozygous animals, would appear only solid color offspring. The ‘heterozygous’ animals, which did contain in some proportion the genes for off-colored offspring would be the ones, which would have to supply Jacob's own future flocks. But by selective breeding, under the direction of the Lord, Jacob could eventually develop a flock of predominately spotted and speckled animals” (Henry M. Morris,

The Genesis Record, pages 474-477, Baker Book House).

Some commentators believe that Jacob is acting deceitfully in Genesis 30:37-43 but this emphatically is not the case if we start from the premise that the Lord gave him these instructions! Furthermore, remember that in his proposal to Laban, which Laban agreed to, Jacob proposed that he start with nothing!

Jacob made the proposal in such a way that the only way he could successfully have a flock of multicolored animals was if the Lord intervened and supernaturally guided him and instructed him and prospered him.

Also, some criticize Jacob's techniques here as not being accurate scientifically and nothing but an old wives tale. However, scientists have not been able to work out concerning the transmission of hereditary factors.

In a certain population there are multitudes of different characteristics, which may appear in different individual animals of that species. The potential for variation in the DNA molecular structure is tremendous. Exactly what it is that determines the actual characteristics a particular individual may have, out of all the potential characteristics that are theoretically available in the gene pool is not yet known in any significant degree.

Some critics of Jacob breeding techniques state that it is scientifically impossible to achieve the results that he did when these techniques are predicated on the belief that visual impressions at the time of conception affect the outcome at birth

Henry M. Morris, "Though it is very unlikely that an external image can be transmitted through the visual apparatus to the brain and thus in some way as a signal to the DNA structure to specify certain characteristics to be triggered in the embryo.

However, it is true that certain chemicals can and do have a significant prenatal influence if they can reach the embryo or prior to conception, the DNA in the germ cells. It is possible that certain chemicals in the wood of these trees, peeled rods of which were actually in the water, which the flocks came to drink, were capable somehow of affecting the animals. The water treated with these

peeled rods must have served as an aphrodisiac and promoter of fertility among the flocks. At least one such chemical substance found in these trees has been used for such a purpose in both ancient and modern times. The mere sight of the striped rods may have served as an aphrodisiac to the flocks when they came to drink, much like the effect of pornographic pictures have in stimulating the sexual apparatus" (Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record, pages 474-477, Baker Book House).

This is implied by the verb *chamam*, which the NASB translates "mated" in Genesis 30:38 and is more accurately translated by the NIV "were in heat" since it means, "to be hot, to be in heat, to be aroused sexually."

Henry M. Morris, "So in some way not understood but apparently confirmed by many practical animal raisers since, the sight of white-streaked rods seems to stimulate these animals to sexual activity" (Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record, pages 474-477, Baker Book House).

Now, in Genesis 30:40, the identification of some of the striped and dark colored animals as belonging to Laban is confusing since according to the terms of the contract these animals belong to Jacob. But it seems clear that Laban has changed the contract to give himself some of the streaked animals (see Genesis 31:7-8).

In Genesis 30:41-42, the Lord directed Jacob to employ certain techniques that would strengthen Jacob's flocks and weaken Laban because Laban had mistreated Jacob for fourteen years.

Henry M. Morris, "First of all, the Lord had Jacob divide his flocks into two shifts, composed of stronger and weaker animals, respectively. He used the rods in the troughs when the stronger animals drank but not when the weaker ones came there. Therefore, the stronger animals were stimulated to mate, and the others were not" (Henry M. Morris, The Genesis Record, pages 474-477, Baker Book House).

This meant that a greater and greater percentage of the animals in Jacob's flock were strong animals and in increasing percentage in Laban's were weaker animals.

In Genesis 30:43 that within a space of perhaps four or five years, Jacob's flocks had grown so large so that he prospered greatly from it so that he had to employ many servants, both male and female and had purchased many camels and asses. With the Lord's help, Jacob had quickly become a very prosperous rancher and had not acted deceitfully at all towards Laban. With the Lord's guidance, Jacob had become prosperous by means of sound practices of animal breeding.

The selective breeding techniques that Jacob employs that are recorded in Genesis 30:37-43 were given to him by the Lord in a dream which is implied in Genesis 31:10-13 since the Lord states to Jacob that He is responsible for these techniques being successful.

Genesis 31:6-12

"You know that I have served your father with all my strength."

"Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me."

"If he spoke thus, 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth speckled; and if he spoke thus, 'The striped shall be your wages,' then all the flock brought forth striped."

"Thus God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me."

"And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled."

"Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob,' and I said, 'Here I am.'"

"He said, 'Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.'"

During the time that the animals were in heat and mating by the water troughs Jacob saw in the dream that the males that were impregnating the females were described as "striped, speckled and mottled."

Now, we know that all the "striped speckled and spotted" animals were taken away by Laban's sons in a three day journey, thus leaving only the solid colored animals, which belonged to Laban's flock.

The dream indicates that the "striped, speckled and mottled" animals were heterozygous carrying the particular genes for streaks, spots and speckles even though their coats were all solid color.

In the dream, God related that He could see into the gene structure, though Jacob could not and knew the true nature of the animals. Therefore, the homozygous animals, which could produce offspring colored like themselves were restrained from mating by means of God's divine omnipotence.

Genesis 31

Genesis 31 records for us the story of Jacob's departure from Laban in Paddan Aram. This chapter contains the final act in the drama of the tumultuous relationship between Jacob and Laban.

In Genesis 31:1-2, we will see Laban and his sons displaying a bad attitude towards Jacob because the Lord has been prospering Jacob and giving him spotted, speckled and stripe flocks from Laban's solid colored flocks. Also, we will see in Genesis 31:3, the Lord commanding Jacob to leave Laban and return home to the land of Canaan and his father Isaac.

Genesis 31:1

"Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, 'Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth.'"

Genesis 31:2

"Jacob saw the attitude of Laban, and behold, it was not friendly toward him as formerly."

Genesis 31:3

"Then the LORD said to Jacob, 'Return to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you.'"

This is the second time that we see Laban's sons mentioned, with the first mention of them taking place in Genesis 30:35. The Scriptures do not tell us how many sons Laban had or how old they

were. They should have been involved in the marriage of their sisters, as Laban was when Rebekah was married to Isaac. Therefore, they must have either been too young to be involved in the marriage of their sisters or Laban must have been a very dominating character to keep everything in his own hands.

In Genesis 30:35, we saw that Laban gave his sons care of the spotted, speckled, and striped flocks, which were separated from the solid colored animals among his flocks. Then, out of mistrust for Jacob, Laban sent his boys on a three day journey in order to ensure that Jacob would not use these flocks to impregnate his solid colored animals, which Jacob would be shepherding.

Jacob's prosperity stirred up jealousy on the part of Laban's sons. Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another's success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something. Therefore, we see that Laban's sons were resentful and intolerant and suspicious of Jacob's success and were vigilant in maintaining and guarding their father's possessions and prosperity, which they would inherit.

Jealousy originated in eternity past with Satan since he was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ's relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic since it is Satanic viewpoint. Therefore, we see Laban's sons under Satanic influence by being jealous towards Isaac since jealousy is demonic in origin.

James 3:13-16

"Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom."

"But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth."

"This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic."

"For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing."

Jealousy is a manifestation of the old Adamic sin nature (See Galatians 5:20) and produces rottenness to the bones (Prov. 14:30) and is not satisfied until it seeks its revenge (Prov. 6:34-35; 27:4) and leads to murder (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:20) and to inordinate ambition and competition (Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4).

We also must note that Laban's sons fail to acknowledge that Jacob basically worked as an indenture servant to Laban for fourteen years in order to build up Laban's wealth. They fail to see that their father had dealt deceitfully with Jacob as well.

Also, we see that Laban's attitude towards Jacob had changed and was getting dirty looks from Laban as a result of the Lord prospering Jacob from Laban's flocks. Laban had been willing to use Jacob as long as it was to his advantage but he was not happy to see Jacob's prosperity above his own. Therefore, we see that Laban is a "user."

Jacob was a great shepherd who made Laban a lot of money and so Laban acted kindly toward him. The incentive for kindness on the part of Laban towards Jacob was gone now that Jacob was prospering from Laban's flocks with the Lord's help and was no longer working full time for Laban. So the situation becomes intolerable for both parties and so it is definitely time for Jacob to leave.

Laban's sons recognized that all Jacob's wealth came from what had been their father's but this was the Lord's doing. So they suspect foul play on the part of Jacob, which would be understandable from their point of view since like their father, they were natural minded men and not believers.

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

Unknown to Laban's sons was that the Lord intervened and rendered justice to Jacob by giving him revelation as to selective breeding techniques (Compare Genesis 30:37-43 with 31:4-13).

These selective breeding techniques enabled Jacob to produce numerous offspring that were speckled, spotted and striped from Laban's flocks, which

Jacob was shepherding even though these flocks were also solid in color.

Genesis 30:25-43

"Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away that I may go to my own place and to my own country.'"

"Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."

"But Laban said to him, 'If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account.'"

"He continued, 'Name me your wages, and I will give it.'"

"But he said to him, 'You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me.'"

"For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?"

"So he said, 'What shall I give you?' And Jacob said, 'You shall not give me anything. If you will do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock.'"

"let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages."

"So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen."

"Laban said, 'Good, let it be according to your word.'"

"So he removed on that day the striped and spotted male goats and all the speckled and spotted female goats, every one with white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep, and gave them into the care of his sons."

"And he put a distance of three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks."

"Then Jacob took fresh rods of poplar and almond and plane trees, and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white which was in the rods."

"He set the rods which he had peeled in front of the flocks in the gutters, even in the watering troughs, where the flocks came to drink; and they mated when they came to drink."

"So the flocks mated by the rods, and the flocks brought forth striped, speckled, and spotted."

"Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the striped and all the black in the flock of Laban; and he put his own herds apart, and did not put them with Laban's flock."

"Moreover, whenever the stronger of the flock were mating, Jacob would place the rods in the sight of the flock in the gutters, so that they might mate by the rods."

"but when the flock was feeble, he did not put them in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's."

"So the man became exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks and female and male servants and camels and donkeys."

Under the laws of heredity, even though a species of animal may have certain "dominant" traits such as the white color of sheep, there are, in each generation, certain individual animals that manifest one or more "recessive" traits such as the brown color among the sheep. The Lord simply increased the statistical proportion of animals in future generations of Laban's flocks that would appear with these recessive traits. The "heterozygous" animals, which did contain in some proportion the genes for off-colored offspring would be the ones, which would have to supply Jacob's own future flocks. Therefore, by selective breeding, under the direction of the Lord, Jacob could eventually develop a flock of predominately spotted and speckled animals

(Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Record*, pages 474-477, Baker Book House).

The selective breeding techniques that Jacob employs that are recorded in Genesis 30:37-43 were given to him by the Lord in a dream which is implied in Genesis 31:10-13 since the Lord states to Jacob that He is responsible for these techniques being successful.

This was not an accident that Jacob overheard the words of Laban's sons since this was according to the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. As the object of Satanic attack, the Lord directs Jacob to leave Laban since he was to carry on the line of Christ and was to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel from whom Christ would come and bring blessing to the entire world and destroy the works of the devil.

"Lord" is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God indicating that Jacob had a covenant relationship with God and that God is about to fulfill His covenant promises He made with Jacob that are recorded in Genesis 28:10-15 and specifically the promises of a homecoming and protection.

The term *Yahweh*, "Lord" also emphasizes the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Jacob.

The Lord's intervention in the life of Jacob in ruling in favor of Jacob over Laban, which is recorded in Genesis 30:25-43 and confirmed in Genesis 31:4-13 has caused a rift in the relationship between Jacob and Laban, which can only be resolved by Jacob leaving Laban.

So far we have seen that Jacob had heard of the antagonism of Laban's sons towards him because of his prosperity. Also, he has also seen this antagonism by virtue of Laban's bad attitude towards him. Any lingering doubts as to the proper course of action that Jacob should take are soon dispelled by the Lord's command for him to leave Laban and return home to Canaan as well as the Lord's reassurance to Jacob of protection from Laban.

The Lord's command to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers" and the promise "I will be with

you" would evoke memories in Jacob of the revelation he received from the Lord at Bethel before leaving Canaan to depart for Paddan Aram, and which revelation is recorded in Genesis 28:10-15. Therefore, we see that the Lord's command to Jacob "Return to the land of your fathers" recorded in Genesis 31:3 indicates to Jacob that the Lord is about to fulfill the promise He made to Jacob "I will bring you back to this land" recorded in Genesis 28:15.

The Lord's faithfulness to Jacob in protecting him and prospering reminds us of God's faithfulness towards us here in the church age.

1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

2 Thessalonians 3:3, "But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."

Therefore, we see that Lord's promise to Jacob that "I am with you" recorded in Genesis 31:3 echoes the promise the Lord made to Jacob "I will be with you" recorded in Genesis 28:15 and is a guarantee to Jacob of the Lord's presence in his life. The Lord's promise to be present in Jacob's life reminds us of the Lord's promise to us here in the church age that He will never leave us or forsake us.

Hebrews 13:5-6, "Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,' so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?'"

In Genesis 31:4-16, we have the record of Jacob informing his wives that the Lord has commanded him to leave Laban and his wives agree to leave with him.

Genesis 31:4-5

"So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field, and said to them, 'I see your father's attitude, that it is not friendly toward me as formerly, but the God of my father has been with me.'"

The fact that Jacob “sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field” suggests that Jacob is now in charge of his home since we have seen in Genesis 29:31-30:24 he was being ordered around by his wives and used as a stud by his competing wives.

The fact that Jacob “sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field” and that they obeyed him indicates that both women are subordinating themselves to Jacob and respecting him as they should according to the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:22, “Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.”

The fact that Jacob “sent and called Rachel and Leah to his flock in the field” demonstrates that he is considerate of his wives, which is an expression of his love for them and responsibility of a Christian husband.

Ephesians 5:25, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

The fact that Jacob spoke to his wives first to inform them why they needed to leave their father and simply did not order them to come with him, no questions asked, demonstrated his love for them and consideration of their feelings since Laban was their father.

Rachel’s name is mentioned first and then Leah indicating that she is given priority over Leah as the principle object of his love and affection. The lower social status of his concubines, Zilpah and Bilhah made it unnecessary for Jacob to seek their agreement to his plan to leave.

The first reason why Jacob summons Rachel and Leah while shepherding his flock in the field was so as to not arouse the suspicion of Laban or his sons and the second reason was for protection from eavesdroppers.

The fact that Jacob desired to leave Laban secretly was “not” a sin since in Scripture we see that David kept his whereabouts secret from Saul in order to protect himself (1 Samuel 19:2). The Lord Jesus Christ went in secret to the Temple in order to avoid a confrontation with the Pharisees, which could lead to His premature arrest before the time that the Father had ordained for Him (See John

7:1-10). However, although it was not a sin that Jacob left secretly, it was a sin that he left secretly out of fear of Laban.

In response to Laban’s question as to why Jacob left secretly, Jacob replies in Genesis 31:31, “Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.” Therefore, Jacob’s sin in this matter was a lack of faith in the Lord to protect him from Laban.

Jacob should have left openly, trusting that the Lord would protect him from Laban as He said He would in Genesis 28:15 in the phrase “I will keep you.” Jacob’s sin of fear due to a lack of faith repeats the sin of his grandfather Abraham who out of fear of Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech said that Sarah was his sister and not his wife (See Genesis 12:9-20; 20:1-18). Jacob’s sin of fear due to a lack of faith repeats the sin of his father of Isaac who out of fear of the Philistines told them that Rebekah was his sister and not his wife (See Genesis 26:7-11). Unlike, his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, Jacob’s fear was not for his own life but that his loved ones would be taken away from him by force.

Jacob had never previously informed his wives about the terrible situation between him and their father out of respect for their love for their father but now he had to present the complete picture to them since the Lord wants him to leave Laban. Jacob begins by pointing out to both women the change in their father’s attitude towards him, which was caused by the Lord intervening and instructing him in the use of selective breeding techniques and prospering him at the expense of Laban. This conversation with his wives reveals that Jacob has grown up quite a bit spiritually in the last twenty years since he openly proclaims his faith in the Lord and His promises and gives all the credit to the Lord for blessing him despite the antagonism of Laban and his sons towards him.

Jacob’s statement “the God of my father has been with me” is an acknowledgment that God has been faithful to him as He was to his father Isaac as demonstrated by God fulfilling His promise that He made to him at Bethel twenty years prior to be with him, which is recorded in Genesis 28:15.

Jacob employs the noun *Elohim*, “God” rather than the covenant name of God, *Yahweh*, “Lord” since

the former emphasizes the omnipotence of God, which was manifested by prospering Jacob in spite of Laban's attempt to cheat him.

Genesis 31:6

“You know that I have served your father with all my strength.”

Notice that Jacob consistently refers to Laban as “your father,” which he does in order to contrast the spiritual character of “my father” (Isaac) with the godless character of “your father” (Laban).

Jacob declares to his wives that he served Laban with all his strength, which is impressive since we see in Genesis 29:10 that he demonstrated great strength in moving the large rock from a well in order to impress Rachel.

The fact that Jacob served Laban with all his strength even though Laban was a terrible employer demonstrates the spiritual principle, which is to work hard for your employer as to the Lord even if the employer is unreasonable and you will be rewarded by the Lord (See Ephesians 6:5-8; 1 Peter 2:18-20; Colossians 3:22-24).

Genesis 31:7

“Yet your father has cheated me and changed my wages ten times; however, God did not allow him to hurt me.”

Jacob's statement “God did not allow him (Laban) to hurt me” is an acknowledgment that God has been faithful in fulfilling His promise that He made to Jacob at Bethel twenty years prior to protect him, which is denoted in the phrase “I...will keep you” in Genesis 28:15.

Jacob's statement that Laban changed his wages “ten” times is a figure implying “enough is enough” since in the Bible the number ten signifies the perfection of the divine order, thus implying that from God's perspective, Laban had cheated him long enough and now God is intervening and commanding him to leave Laban.

Genesis 31:8

“If he spoke thus, ‘The speckled shall be your wages,’ then all the flock brought forth speckled; and if he spoke thus, ‘The striped shall be your wages,’ then all the flock brought forth striped.”

In Genesis 31:7-8 the reader learns what had not yet been revealed in Genesis 30, namely, that Laban had repeatedly changed the terms of the original contract he made with Jacob recorded in Genesis 30:25-36 in order to cheat Jacob.

Genesis 30:32 reveals that the original agreement stipulated that “every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats” would be Jacob's wages. However, Genesis 31:8 reveals that Laban changed the terms stipulated in the original agreement by changing Jacob's wages to only the “speckled” animals among his flocks and then he changed it to only the “striped.”

So it appears that Laban allowed only one of these markings at a time to be Jacob's wages instead of giving him all the speckled, spotted sheep and goats. When the speckled animals multiplied, Laban would change the terms to only the spotted and when they multiplied, he changed it to the striped, thus it was always Laban's intention to cheat Jacob by giving him what he thought would be a small number of the young of his flocks.

Genesis 31:9

“Thus God has taken away your father's livestock and given them to me.”

Jacob's statement that God took away from Laban his flocks and gave them to him is further indication that Jacob did not attempt to cheat Laban and acknowledges that the justice of God has ruled in his favor and thus God has sovereignly chosen to give Laban's livestock to him.

Psalm 103:6, “The LORD performs righteous deeds and judgments for all who are oppressed.”

The fact that God ruled in favor of Jacob is a fulfillment of the blessing pronounced upon Jacob by his father Isaac, recorded in Genesis 27:29, namely, that those who bless Jacob will be blessed and those who curse him will be cursed. Therefore, when Isaac pronounces this blessing on Jacob, he is stating in effect that like his grandfather Abraham, the Lord would identify with the cause of Jacob, thus, blessing Jacob would be equivalent to doing it to God whereas cursing Jacob would in effect be cursing God.

Laban “cursed” Jacob in the sense that he dealt unjustly and deceitfully with Jacob for twenty years and so by taking away Laban’s flocks and giving them to Jacob, God was pronouncing judgment upon Laban.

Genesis 31:10

“And it came about at the time when the flock were mating that I lifted up my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats which were mating were striped, speckled, and mottled.”

Genesis 31:11

“Then the angel of God said to me in the dream, ‘Jacob,’ and I said, ‘Here I am.’”

Genesis 31:12

“He said, ‘Lift up now your eyes and see that all the male goats which are mating are striped, speckled, and mottled; for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you.’”

The “angel of God” is the preincarnate Christ since in Genesis 31:13, He states to Jacob that He is the “God of Bethel.”

The dream that is recorded in Genesis 31:10-12 and is to be distinguished from the dream that is recorded in Genesis 31:3 since in the former, the Lord informs Jacob that He is ruling in his favor and judging Laban whereas in the latter, the Lord tells him to leave Laban and head home to Canaan.

Genesis 31:10-12 refers to the events recorded in Genesis 30:37-43 since in the dream God makes reference to Jacob’s contract with Laban, which stipulated that Jacob would receive as his wages, the “spotted, speckled and striped” of Laban’s flock.

The selective breeding techniques that Jacob employs that are recorded in Genesis 30:37-43 were given to him by the Lord in a dream which is implied in Genesis 31:10-12 since the Lord states to Jacob that He is responsible for these techniques being successful.

Genesis 31:10-12 records that during the time that the animals were in heat and mating by the water troughs Jacob saw in the dream that the males that were impregnating the females were described as “striped, speckled and mottled.”

Now, we know that all the “striped speckled and spotted” animals were taken away by Laban’s sons in a three day journey, thus leaving only the solid colored animals, which belonged to Laban’s flock.

The dream indicates that the “striped, speckled and mottled” animals were heterozygous carrying the particular genes for streaks, spots and speckles even though their coats were all solid color. In the dream, God related that He could see into the gene structure, though Jacob could not and knew the true nature of the animals. Therefore, by means of God’s divine omnipotence the homozygous animals, which could produce offspring colored like themselves were restrained from mating and the heterozygous animals were compelled to mate.

The Lord statement to Jacob, “for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you” is a reference to the omniscience of God in the sense that God knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history.

Proverbs 15:3, “The eyes of the LORD are everywhere, keeping watch on the wicked and the good.”

Therefore, the Lord’s statement “for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you” would indicate to Jacob that the Lord knew perfectly, eternally and simultaneously everything that had transpired between him and Laban.

So this statement would of course comfort Jacob in that since God knew everything that had transpired between him and Laban, God also had already taken measures from eternity past to protect him.

Genesis 31:13

“I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me; now arise, leave this land, and return to the land of your birth.”

The Lord’s statement “I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar, where you made a vow to Me” was a reminder to Jacob of his worship at Bethel, which was in response to the theophany, divine promises and vision of elect

angels, and which worship is recorded in Genesis 28:16-22.

The Lord's reference to a pillar reminded Jacob when he anointed a pillar by pouring oil on its top, which is recorded in Genesis 28:18 and expressed his dedication, devotion, consecration and gratitude to the Lord for the gracious promises that He made to him in the dream at Bethel twenty years before.

The Lord's reference to a vow in Genesis 31:13 reminded Jacob of the vow that he made to the Lord, recorded in Genesis 28:20, which was his verbal and voluntary act of submitting to the Lord's authority and expressed that he was reorienting his life and had committed himself to living according to the standards of the Lord.

In Genesis 31:14-16, we see that both Rachel and Leah were united and in agreement in their response to Jacob informing them that the Lord wanted him to leave Laban and return home to Canaan.

Genesis 31:14

“Rachel and Leah said to him, ‘Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house?’”

Genesis 31:15

“Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price.”

Genesis 31:16

“Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you.”

Undoubtedly, Jacob was relieved to see and hear that both Rachel and Leah were unified and in agreement to leave with him. He was relieved that they both were united in going with him since they had fought and competed for Jacob's love and affection since the day he married them. However, both women were united in their love for him and so both were willing to leave with him.

Genesis 31:14-15 reveals that Rachel and Leah agreed to follow Jacob to his homeland not only out of retaliation against their father but Genesis

31:16 also reveals they agreed out of recognition of God's providential dealings with their father.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on Rachel and Leah's response recorded in Genesis 31:14-16, writes, “Their grievances pertain to the past, present and future. In the past, Laban sold them and used up what was paid for them; in the present, he counts them as foreigners; their future and that of their children depends on the wealth they now have and that rightly belongs to them but which they fear Laban will steal” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 426, Zondervan).

The rhetorical question of the two women, “Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners?” expresses the fact that they were exploited in the same way as Jacob who was a foreigner from Canaan rather than being treated as his own flesh and blood.

Their statement “For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price” refers to the fact that by cheating Jacob out of his wages for fourteen years, Laban in effect had consumed the bride-price since Jacob's fourteen years of service was payment to marry both Rachel and Leah.

The “bride-price” refers to the compensation paid to the family of the bride for the loss of the bride's presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to Laban's family that Rachel and Leah would be well cared for by Jacob.

The fourteen years' service that Jacob performed for Laban in order to marry both Rachel and Leah was to be in lieu of the usual “bride-price” and so by cheating Jacob out of his wages, Laban was cheating his daughters and grandchildren!

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this statement, writes, “Legally, the consummating sum given in marriage was to be transferred at least in part to the daughters. Some of Jacob's wages during the fourteen years he worked for them should also have belonged to them. Further, by cheating Jacob during the last six years, Laban has continued to cheat them” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 426, Zondervan).

The fact that Jacob worked hard for seven years in order to marry both Rachel and Leah made both women love Jacob all the more and resent their father. Rather than treating the bride-price like a

dowry, to provide a financial base for his daughters and grandchildren's future well-being and security, as should have been done, Laban had used it up for himself and gave them nothing.

Both Rachel and Leah felt that since their husband had been responsible for the great prosperity of their father, and since this was in effect what Jacob had given in order to marry them, these possessions by all rights should have come to them and their children.

Instead, Laban made it clear that he would give neither woman anything and as a result they felt justified in interpreting God's dealings with Laban, in causing his flocks to gradually become those of Jacob, as simply taking what had rightly belonged to them and their children and restoring it to them.

The reason for Rachel and Leah's decision to leave with Jacob was not based simply on obedience to God's will but rather because their best material interests were not being served by the present arrangement whereas Jacob wanted to leave out of obedience to the will of God.

Rachel and Leah's statement "do whatever God has said to you" indicates that they acknowledge God's blessing upon Jacob and that it is God's will for them to leave their father and go with Jacob and expresses their faith in the Lord and their willingness to risk a journey to the Promised Land.

In Genesis 31:17-21, we see Jacob departing from Paddan Aram and heading towards Canaan.

Genesis 31:17-18

"Then Jacob arose and put his children and his wives upon camels; and he drove away all his livestock and all his property which he had gathered, his acquired livestock which he had gathered in Paddan-aram, to go to the land of Canaan to his father Isaac."

Jacob put his wives and children on camels, which we have noted in our previous studies in the book of Genesis, were a prime measure of wealth back in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob since camels were rare back then.

Genesis 29:17-30:24 records that Jacob had four wives, eleven boys and one girl. Jacob's wives included not only Rachel and Leah but also his

concubines, Zilpah (Leah's maid) and Bilhah (Rachel's maid).

In the days of the patriarchs, a concubine was considered as a "second-class wife," acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights.

In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be sent away with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

The boys that Leah bore Jacob included Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (See Genesis 29:31-35) as well as Issachar, and Zebulun (See Genesis 30:14-21). Leah was only one of Jacob's wives who bore him a girl (See Genesis 30:21). The boys that Leah's maid, Zilpah bore to Jacob included Gad and Asher (See Genesis 30:9-13). The boys that Rachel's maid, Bilhah bore to Jacob, included Dan and Naphtali (See Genesis 30:1-8). The only boy that Rachel bore to Jacob at this point in Jacob's life was Joseph (See Genesis 30:22-24) but later on she gives birth to Benjamin but dies while giving birth (See Genesis 35:16-19).

Jacob would have put all the material goods on donkeys and would have ordered his servants to drive his flocks ahead of him.

"Drove away" is the verb *nahagh* (ghⁿ*), which in this context refers to flocks of sheep and herds of cattle being "led" or "driven."

"Livestock" is the noun *miqneh* (hn#q+m!), which refers sheep and goats.

A comparison of Genesis 30:25-43 and Genesis 31:10-12 indicates that Jacob's livestock would have included "striped, speckled, spotted and mottled (blotched)" sheep and goats as well as dark colored sheep.

"Property" is the noun *r^ekhush* (vWkr+) (rek-oosh), which refers to "possessions."

"Gathered" is the verb *rakhash* (vk^r*) (raw-kash), which means, "to acquire" and in context refers to all the property and livestock that Jacob had "acquired" during his last six years of service to Laban.

“Acquired livestock” is composed of the noun *miqneh* (hⁿ#q+m!), “livestock” in the form of sheep and goats and the noun *qinyan* (/n[^]q*) (kin-yawn), “acquired,” which denotes that which is acquired by purchase.

Therefore, the expression refers to livestock in the form of sheep and goats that Jacob acquired by purchase, which implies that the livestock that he purchased, which he took with him were solid colored or homozygous white sheep and goats since he had only striped, spotted, speckled and mottled sheep and goats and dark colored sheep.

Remember, after fourteen years of service to Laban, Jacob still had no property or livestock of his own (See Genesis 30:30). Therefore, everything that Jacob is taking with him he acquired during the last six years of his service to Laban in Paddan Aram.

“Paddan Aram” (/D[^]P[^]m! sR*a&) is another name for “Aram Naharaim,” which means, “Aram of the Two Rivers.”

Therefore, the word is synonymous with the name “Mesopotamia,” which appears in Genesis 24:10 since the word “Mesopotamia” is composed of the pronoun noun *Aram* (sr*a&), “Aram” and the plural form of the noun *nahar* (rh*n*), “two rivers.”

These two rivers were in the western part of Mesopotamia and the two rivers were the Balikh and the Khabur, tributaries of the Euphrates River. The city of Haran was on the Balikh River about a seven hundred mile journey north-northeast of Beersheba and nearby was the city of Nahor, which was founded by Abraham’s brother, Nahor.

The name “Paddan” means “field, plain” therefore, the expression “Paddan Aram” means, “plain of Aram.”

The name “Aram” (sr*a()) (Hebrew: ‘*aram* pronounced arawm) means, “exalted” and is frequently translated “Syrian” or “Syria” and is used to speak specifically of the Aramean people who were a leading branch of Semitic people living in Mesopotamia and northern Syria (2 Sam. 8:5-6; 1 Kgs. 20:20-21).

Isaac and Jacob both took Aramean wives (Gen. 25:20; 28:5) and in fact, Jacob is called the

“wandering Aramean” in Deuteronomy 26:5. Therefore, “Paddan Aram” refers to the city of Nahor where Abraham’s brother founded a city and named it after himself and was the place in which Laban and his family resided.

So Genesis 31:18 records that Jacob leaves with his family and possessions and livestock and heads home to his father who resides in the land of Canaan.

“Canaan” is the more ancient name of Palestine, apparently derived from Hurrian, meaning, “belonging to the land of red purple,” the dye the early Canaanites or Phoenician traders peddled far and wide.

The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

The Lord promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan as a permanent possession (See Genesis 12:7; 13:14-17; 17:8) as well as Isaac (See Genesis 26:3-5) and Jacob (See Genesis 28:13).

The possession of the land refers to the “Palestinian” Covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18). The “Palestinian” covenant was reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The “Palestinian” Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan.

The boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18). The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel

under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Jacob’s departure from Paddan Aram or Mesopotamia is in marked contrast with his arrival at this place. If you recall, Jacob left his father Isaac and his mother Rebekah empty handed when he departed twenty years prior to go to Paddan Aram and see his uncle Laban. But now, we see Jacob leaving his uncle Laban and Paddan Aram with quite a caravan and very wealthy according to a comparison with Genesis 30:43.

Henry M. Morris commenting on Genesis 31:17-18, writes, “The momentous nature of this event is indicated by the formal statement of verse 18, Jacob was now leaving Paddan Aram or Mesopotamia, to go back to Canaan and to Isaac his father. The time had come for him to take over the patriarchal responsibility associated with God’s promises. He possessed both the birthright and the blessing; and they entailed great responsibilities, as well as privileges, which it was now time to fulfill” (The Genesis Record, page 482, Baker Book House).

Genesis 31:19

“When Laban had gone to shear his flock, then Rachel stole the household idols that were her father's.”

Genesis 31:19 explains to the reader that Jacob was able to escape without Laban knowing about it since Laban was out shearing the sheep, which was a very busy time for sheep farmers such as Laban.

Bruce K. Waltke writes, “Sheep shearing was carried out in the spring. It entailed large numbers of men working at great distances from their homes for an extended period of time. Consequently, Laban and his men are far away and very preoccupied, allowing Rachel to steal the gods and enabling Jacob to be gone for three days (31:22) before Laban becomes aware of it” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 427, Zondervan).

Genesis 31:19 records that Rachel stole Laban’s household idols while Laban was out shearing the sheep, which was a sin according to Exodus 20:15, Leviticus 19:11 and Deuteronomy 5:19.

Exodus 20:15, “You shall not steal.”

“Household idols” is the noun *t'raphim* (<ytl!u*r+T!) (ter-aw-feme), which were small idols like figurines and were considered the family gods, which gave the family protection and were kept on a god-shelf and were outlawed in Israel (See 1 Samuel 15:23; 19:13; 2 Kings 23:24; Zechariah 10:2f.).

These gods were usually small figurines (two to three inches long), sometimes carried on the body as charms, many of which archaeologists have discovered.

There are many reasons offered by Bible scholars and commentators as to the reason why Rachel stole her father’s household idols. The obvious reason is that by taking away her father’s household idols, she was taking away his protection from his perspective, which the idols were thought to give.

Another explanation supported by the text and archaeology relates her theft to a practice during the days of the patriarchs that is mentioned Hurrian texts found in a place called “Nuzi,” which is about 10 miles southwest of modern Kirkuk in northeastern Iraq. These Hurrian texts included about 5,000 tablets from family archives from approximately 1500 B.C. and they give us insight into life in the days of the patriarchs.

According to these documents from Nuzi, possession of the household gods was connected to inheritance and property rights of their owner. Therefore, Rachel stole the household gods in order to establish a future claim on Laban’s family inheritance. She thought by possessing them would somehow help validate the legitimacy of her husband’s title to the flocks he had acquired while serving Laban and represent the inheritance she had a right to expect.

The household gods were a token of rightful claim to the possessions and the headship of the family. Rachel must have felt justified in stealing these gods and in expecting to share in the family inheritance. After all, this is what she and Leah

had just affirmed to Jacob: Genesis 31:14, “Rachel and Leah said to him, ‘Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house?’”

From Rachel’s perspective, getting Laban’s wealth was God’s will and if that was the case with the matter of the flocks which Jacob had been tending, why should it not be true of the estate at Laban’s death? Also, Rachel does not tell Jacob of her theft since he would undoubtedly disapproved of her taking anything with her that was Laban’s property since he already rejected anything that was her father’s.

Genesis 31:20

“And Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him that he was fleeing.”

“Deceived” is the verb *ganav* (bn^G*) (gaw-nav), “to steal,” which is used with the noun *lev* (bl@), “heart,” which refers to the mentality of the soul and so these two literally mean that Jacob “stole the heart” of Laban.

The meaning of the expression “stole the heart” of Laban is understood by comparing it with the prepositional phrase “by not telling him (Laban) that he (Jacob) was fleeing.”

Therefore, Jacob stole the heart of Laban in the sense that he left secretly and unobserved by Laban so that Laban had no knowledge of and was totally unaware that Jacob had left. The fact that Jacob left secretly was “not” a sin since in Scripture we see that David kept his whereabouts secret from Saul in order to protect himself (1 Samuel 19:2). The Lord Jesus Christ went in secret to the Temple in order to avoid a confrontation with the Pharisees, which could lead to His premature arrest before the time that the Father had ordained for Him (See John 7:1-10). However, although it was not a sin that Jacob left secretly, it was a sin that he left secretly out of fear of Laban.

In response to Laban’s question as to why Jacob left secretly, Jacob replies in Genesis 31:31, “Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.” Therefore, Jacob’s sin in this matter was a lack of faith in the Lord to protect him from Laban. Jacob should have left openly, trusting that the Lord

would protect from Laban as He said He would in Genesis 28:15 in the phrase “I will keep you.”

Jacob’s sin of fear due to a lack of faith repeats the sin of his grandfather Abraham who out of fear of Pharaoh of Egypt and Abimelech said that Sarah was his sister and not his wife (See Genesis 12:9-20; 20:1-18).

Jacob’s sin of fear due to a lack of faith repeats this sin of his father of Isaac who out of fear of the Philistines told them that Rebekah was his sister and not his wife (See Genesis 26:7-11).

Unlike, his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, Jacob’s fear was not for his own life but that his loved ones would be taken away from him by force.

Genesis 31:20 also describes Laban as the “Aramean,” which is an ethnic designation denoting a tribal population, which lived from Mesopotamia to Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine who like the patriarchs were descendants of Shem. The emphasis upon Laban’s ethnic affiliation alerts the reader that Laban and Jacob are now totally alienated from each other and represent two distinct groups of people.

Genesis 31:21

“So he fled with all that he had; and he arose and crossed the Euphrates River, and set his face toward the hill country of Gilead.”

The “Euphrates” river was located in southern Mesopotamia and rises in the mountains of Armenia Major and flows through Assyria, Syria, Mesopotamia, and the city of Babylon, from 1,700 to 1,800 miles into the Persian Gulf.

“The hill country of Gilead” was a fertile, high plateau in Transjordan, which was located between Yarmuk that runs into the Jordan and south of the Sea of Galilee and the northern shore of the Dead Sea.

Jacob’s caravan forded the Euphrates River, which is sufficiently shallow at certain points near its source for this, and headed for Mount Gilead, which was far to the southwest and is a very mountainous region east of the Jordan River whose northern edges are nearly three hundred miles from Haran. Therefore, Jacob and his party had a very long journey to undertake.

In Genesis 31:22-24, we have the record of Laban pursuing Jacob and overtaking him and confronting him in the hill country of Gilead.

Genesis 31:22-23

“When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, then he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him a distance of seven days’ journey, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead.”

Henry M. Morris, “If the three days journey, which typically separated him from Laban’s flocks was oriented in such a way as to place Jacob’s flocks a three days’ journey southwest of Laban’s home (the sheep-shearing would probably have taken place not too far from there), then Jacob and his flocks would have already been approximately eighty or ninety miles on their way when their flight began in earnest. A day’s journey was usually reckoned at about thirty miles for men traveling unencumbered. However, once they began moving the flocks along, they would be able to make only fifteen or twenty miles a day. Thus, once they started driving the cattle, it would take them probably ten days or so to reach the Mount Gilead region” (The Genesis Record, page 483, Baker Book House).

Catching up with Jacob was no easy matter, for he had gained three days’ lead time. By the time Laban had rushed home, discovered the loss of his gods, and gathered the relatives who were armed for battle, a fourth day must have been lost.

Remember, Laban and his men were out in the field busy sheep-shearing and were busy with not only the work itself but also the festivities that were connected with this annual event.

Laban didn’t get word of Jacob’s departure until Jacob had been on the trail for three days. No doubt Laban was furious with Jacob but he and his men could not drop the work of sheep-shearing immediately so by the time they were ready to pursue Jacob, probably another day had gone by.

Once, on the trail, Laban would have driven his men hard to catch up to Jacob and it appears that he and his men covered the entire three hundred miles in only seven days, which is confirmed in that from the Euphrates to Gilead is some three hundred miles.

Jacob was encumbered with his herds and flocks and loses his three days’ advantage by the time seven days of pursuit are ended. Laban and his sons had no intention of letting Jacob take all his flocks to Canaan and were intending to take them by force if necessary and even do harm to Jacob as indicated by the verb *radhaph*, “pursued,” which is used of chasing after someone to do them harm.

Further indicating that Laban was intending to harm Jacob is the verb *davaq*, “overtook,” which denotes military pursuit and is in the hiphil (intensive and reflexive) stem expressing Laban’s hostility towards Jacob indicating that Laban intently caused himself to overtake Jacob.

In Genesis 31:23, the verb *davaq*, does not mean that Laban “overtook” Jacob in the sense that he made contact with him and met with Jacob face to face but rather it means that he “kept close to” Jacob but did not make contact. This interpretation is confirmed by the context since Genesis 31:24 indicates that Laban spent the night where Jacob was encamped before making contact with him or meeting him face to face. Therefore, the verb *davaq* implies that Laban “kept close to” Jacob so that he could make a reconnaissance and evaluate the situation but did not make contact and did not reveal his position to Jacob.

In Genesis 31:25, the verb *nasagh* means that Laban “overtook” Jacob in the sense that he made contact with him and identified his position to Jacob and met with Jacob face to face.

The verb *davaq* in Genesis 31:23 indicates that Laban did not make contact with Jacob whereas *nasagh* in Genesis 31:25 indicates that he came right up to Jacob so as to confront him face to face.

Genesis 31:24

“God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, ‘Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.’”

A comparison of Genesis 31:23 and 24 indicates that once Laban and his men had Jacob and his people in their sight, they encamped for the night without making contact as indicated in that Laban had a dream the night they overtook Jacob.

A comparison of the verb *davaq* in Genesis 31:23 indicates that Laban did not make contact with Jacob whereas *nasagh* in Genesis 31:25 indicates that he came right up to Jacob so as to confront him face to face.

As in Genesis 31:20, Genesis 31:24 also describes Laban as the “Aramean,” which is an ethnic designation denoting a tribal population, which lived from Mesopotamia to Asia Minor and Syria-Palestine and who like the patriarchs were descendants of Shem. The emphasis upon Laban’s ethnic affiliation alerts the reader that Laban and Jacob are now totally alienated from each other and represent two distinct groups of people.

“God” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes the omnipotence of God indicating that Laban is confronting the omnipotent God in a dream who is protecting Jacob, which will discourage Laban from physically harming Jacob.

The fact that God intervenes on behalf of Jacob by warning Laban not to harm Jacob is a fulfillment of His promises to Jacob to be with him and protect and bring him back to the land of Canaan, and which promises are recorded in Genesis 28:15.

Genesis 28:15, “Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

“Be careful” is the niphil imperative form of the verb *shamar* (rmm^v*) (shaw-mar), which means, “to pay attention, listen and obey” and the preposition *l* (l+) (lamed), which functions as an ethical or reflexive dative of advantage meaning, “yourself, for your benefit.”

Therefore, God is saying to Laban in the dream, “Watch yourself,” or in other words, “Pay attention and do what I say for it is your benefit that you do so.”

“That you do not” is the conjunction *pen* (/P#), which indicates the prevention of a possible or potential event, implying that God is taking measures to prevent Laban from taking military action against Jacob and doing him harm.

“Speak” is the verb *davar* (rb^D*) (daw-var), which emphasizes the activity of speaking.

“Either good or bad”: (1) Preposition *min* (/m!), “either” (2) Noun *tov* (bw)f, “good” (3) Preposition *adh* (du^), “or” (4) Noun *ra* (ur^), “evil.”

The preposition *min* is combined with the preposition *adh* and together they literally mean, “from...to” expressing an inclusive idea meaning everything or anything. Therefore, literally speaking this entire expression translated “either good or bad” in the New American Standard literally means, “from good to bad” but idiomatically, it means, “anything positive or negative.”

The noun *tov*, “good” refers to speaking anything “positive” to Jacob that could influence him to return to Paddan Aram such as sweet talking Jacob and proposing any new deals with him. Whereas, the noun *ra*, “evil” refers to Laban speaking anything “negative” to Jacob that would intimidate him and cause him to go against the will of God and return to Paddan Aram.

This exact expression appears in Genesis 24:50 where Laban and Bethuel respond to Abraham’s servant Eliezer’s story of God’s providential activities and proposing that Isaac marry Rebekah by saying “we cannot speak to you bad or good.”

This expression is an example of “merism” which is an expression of totality through the combination of opposites. Therefore, Laban and Bethuel’s response meant that they couldn’t say anything at all and have no choice in the matter since it is clearly God’s will that Isaac marry Rebekah.

In Genesis 31:24, the expression, “do not speak to Jacob either good or bad” is also an example of “merism.” Therefore, the expression means that God prohibited Laban from saying anything to influence Jacob to return since that would be against His will or to say anything by way of bitter reproach or intimidation. This expression does “not” mean he was prohibited from speaking anything at all to Jacob but that he could not say anything to influence Jacob in returning or saying anything by way of bitter reproach. This expression was a proverbial phrase for opposition or interference. Therefore, God does not want Laban sweet talking or proposing any new deals that would entice Jacob to return with him to

Paddan Aram, nor, does God want Laban speaking harsh and bitter words to Jacob in order to intimidate Jacob and cause him to return to Paddan Aram.

This proverbial expression therefore indicates that God does not want Laban to oppose or interfere with Jacob returning to Canaan, which is His will. God does not want Laban saying positive or negative to Jacob that would prevent him from returning to Canaan when it is God's will for him to return.

Therefore, we could translate Genesis 31:24, "God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream of the night and said to him, "Watch yourself, pay attention and do what I say, do not say anything positive or negative to Jacob (so as to prevent him from returning to Canaan), for it is for your benefit."

Genesis 31:25-31 records Jacob leaving Laban secretly out of fear that Laban would take his wives and children from him and which fear was due to a lack of faith in the Lord to honor His promise to protect him from Laban.

Genesis 31:25

"Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead."

Genesis 31:26

"Then Laban said to Jacob, 'What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?'"

Genesis 31:27-28

"Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly."

Genesis 31:29

"It is in my power to do you (plural form of pronominal suffix meaning

"every one of you") harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, 'Be

careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.'"'

Genesis 31:30

"Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?"'

Genesis 31:31

"Then Jacob replied to Laban, 'Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.'"'

This statement reveals that Jacob's sin was not that he left Laban secretly but that he left secretly out of fear of Laban, and which fear was a sin because it was due to a lack of faith in God's promise to him that he would protect him (See Genesis 28:15) and would be with him (See Genesis 28:15 31:3).

If Laban attempted to take back his daughters and his grandchildren, Jacob would have fought. Undoubtedly, the Lord also would have fought for him as well and given him the victory over Laban and his men since Jacob's boys were the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel. Therefore, we see that Jacob answers Laban's first two accusations by revealing that he left secretly out of fear of Laban, and which fear was due to a lack of faith in the Lord's promise to protect him.

In Genesis 31:26, the word "deceiving" is the same expression used in Genesis 31:20, which literally means "to steal the heart" since it is composed of the verb *ganav* (בגנ^G*) (gaw-nav), "to steal," and the noun *lev* (בל@), "heart," which refers to the mentality of the soul.

Jacob stole the heart of Laban in the sense that he left secretly and unobserved by Laban so that Laban had no knowledge of and was totally unaware that Jacob had left.

Jacob had not done Laban any wrong by leaving Laban secretly but he had done God wrong by leaving secretly out of fear for Laban since this fear was due to a lack of faith in God's ability to protect him from Laban.

Fear is a result of unbelief and unbelief is failure to trust that God will protect and provide for us. The fact that Jacob left secretly out of fear of Laban taking his loved ones from him by force is

quite interesting because the Lord had just finished commanding Jacob to return to Canaan and reassured him that He would be with him (See Genesis 31:3). So we see quite clearly that Jacob is not resting in the promises of the Lord and is therefore, not operating in faith but rather unbelief.

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them. True Biblical faith is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.

The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Jacob is looking at Laban and thus entering into fear rather than concentrating on the Lord's promise to protect him.

Principle: Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God, His presence and His Word.

Unbelief operates in the sphere of the old Adamic sin nature and contradicts faith and leaves God out.

Unbelief blinded Jacob as to the presence of the Lord in his life, which he saw firsthand, causing him to see only the difficulties in leaving Laban.

Jacob's unbelief had produced cowardice to the extent that he left secretly like a fugitive.

The apostle Paul taught the Philippian believers to pray to the Father rather than entering into fear.

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Prayers for protection from God fill the Bible.

Psalms 140:1-3, "Rescue me, O LORD, from evil men; Preserve me from violent men who devise evil things in their hearts; They

continually stir up wars. They sharpen their tongues as a serpent; Poison of a viper is under their lips. Selah."

The Bible teaches that fear, worry and anxiety are a sin because it calls into question the perfect immutable character and integrity of God or in other words, His love for the believer (See Matthew 6:19-34).

The apostle Peter instructed believers to cast all anxiety upon the Lord in prayer.

1 Peter 5:7, "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Trusting in God to keep His promises will protect the believer's soul from stress, fear, worry and anxiety.

Jacob's fear of Laban was a total lack of faith or in other words, a total lack of trust and confidence in God's ability to protect him.

Psalms 56:11, "In God I have put my trust, I shall not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

Genesis 31:25

"Laban caught up with Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country, and Laban with his kinsmen camped in the hill country of Gilead."

"Caught up" is the verb *nasagh* (gc^n*) (naw-sag), which means that Laban "overtook" Jacob in the sense that he "came up to" him, or made contact with him and confronted him face to face.

"Pitched" is the verb *taqa* (uq^T*) (taw-kah), and is not the usual verb for pitching a tent, which is *natah* (hf*n*) (naw-taw) (See Genesis 12:8; 26:25).

The verb *taqa* denotes the pounding or thrusting or driving tent pegs into the ground. The verb *taqa* implies a hostile atmosphere that pervades this scene between Jacob and Laban whereas *natah* denotes the pitching of the tent in the sense of spreading out the tent but in a peaceful setting.

The fact that Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit employs this verb *taqa* rather than *natah* indicates that he is trying to paint a picture of a tense and suspenseful scene where violence is about to break out.

Genesis 31:26

“Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?’”

Laban opens his questioning of Jacob by saying “what have you done?” which introduces an accusation of wrongdoing. These are the same accusatory words Jacob spoke to Laban when Laban deceived him on his wedding night and sent Leah into his tent and not Rachel. Laban has reaped what he has sowed.

Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

Laban repeatedly defrauded Jacob from the very beginning of their relationship but now has the audacity to complain that he has been misled by Jacob.

“Deceiving” is the same expression used in Genesis 31:20, which literally means “to steal the heart” since it is composed of the verb *ganav* (bn^G*) (gaw-nav), “to steal,” and the noun *lev* (bl@), “heart,” which refers to the mentality of the soul.

Jacob stole the heart of Laban in the sense that he left secretly and unobserved by Laban so that Laban had no knowledge of and was totally unaware that Jacob had left.

Genesis 31:26

“Then Laban said to Jacob, ‘What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?’”

Laban accuses Jacob of carrying away his daughters like prisoners of war, which is slander and a lie. Lies are an abomination to God, which God hates.

Psalms 34:13, “Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”

Colossians 3:9, “Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.”

Ephesians 4:25, “Therefore, laying aside falsehood, SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE OF YOU

WITH HIS NEIGHBOR, for we are members of one another.”

However, Laban is so self-deceived and deluded that he does not recognize that Rachel and Leah are Jacob’s wives even though Jacob has fully satisfied the terms of their agreement of the marriage contract. Furthermore, both Rachel and Leah left of their own accord with Jacob and even complained bitterly of their father’s treatment of them as well as Jacob and their children.

In Genesis 31:14-16, we see that both Rachel and Leah were united and in agreement in their response to Jacob informing them that the Lord wanted him to leave Laban and return home to Canaan. Thus the agreement of Jacob’s wives to leave with him refutes Laban’s accusation that Jacob carried Rachel and Leah off like prisoners of war.

Genesis 31:14-16

“Rachel and Leah said to him, ‘Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father’s house?’”

“Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price.”

“Surely all the wealth which God has taken away from our father belongs to us and our children; now then, do whatever God has said to you.”

The rhetorical question of the two women, “Are we not reckoned by him as foreigners?” expresses the fact that they were exploited in the same way as Jacob who was a foreigner from Canaan rather than being treated as his own flesh and blood.

Their statement “For he has sold us, and has also entirely consumed our purchase price” refers to the fact that by cheating Jacob out of his wages for fourteen years, Laban in effect had consumed the bride-price since Jacob’s fourteen years of service was payment to marry both Rachel and Leah.

The fourteen years’ service that Jacob performed for Laban in order to marry both Rachel and Leah was to be in lieu of the usual “bride-price” and so by cheating Jacob out of his wages, Laban was cheating his daughters and grandchildren!

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on this statement, writes, “Legally, the consummating sum given in marriage was to be transferred at least in part to the daughters. Some of Jacob’s wages during the fourteen years he worked for them should also have belonged to them. Further, by cheating Jacob during the last six years, Laban has continued to cheat them” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 426, Zondervan).

Rather than treating the bride-price like a dowry, to provide a financial base for his daughters and grandchildren’s future well-being and security, as should have been done, Laban had used it up for himself and gave them nothing. Therefore, in Genesis 31:26, Laban’s first accusation is a sin against Jacob since it is a wild exaggeration, totally without basis and without fact and is in fact slander and defamation of Jacob’s character.

Laban’s first accusation against Jacob is hypocrisy as well since Laban feigns concerns for his daughters when in reality he could have cared less about them as demonstrated in his treatment of them over the past twenty years!

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines hypocrisy, “a pretense of having a virtuous character, moral or religious beliefs or principles, etc., that one does not possess; a pretense of having some desirable or publicly approved attitude.”

Laban’s first accusation was hypocrisy because it was a pretense of having concern for his daughters’ safety, which he did not possess as demonstrated by his treatment of his daughters and that his real motive for tracking down Jacob was to harm him and reclaim his household idols according to Genesis 31:30. He is playing the part of an outraged parent and grandparent when in fact he is an indifferent and cruel parent and grandparent who cares for no one but himself and making money!

Genesis 31:27-28

“Why did you flee secretly and deceive me, and did not tell me so that I might have sent you away with joy and with songs, with timbrel and with lyre; and did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters? Now you have done foolishly.”

Laban’s second question “why did you flee secretly and steal away from me” is a complaint against Jacob’s secret departure, which was against the custom of the day when someone was moving away.

Laban is telling Jacob that he didn’t give him an opportunity to say goodbye to Jacob, his daughters and grandchildren by having a party for them but this would sound hollow to Jacob’s family since they were so mistreated and disrespected by Laban.

Jacob, Rachel and Leah have already experienced Laban’s version of a party according to Genesis 29:22-27 where Laban got Jacob drunk and then sent Leah into his tent on his wedding night when he expected Rachel for whom he had just worked seven years for in lieu of the bride-price.

At this point, all of Jacob’s family are rolling their eyes since Laban’s appeal to customs such as a farewell party and kisses make a mockery of him.

Laban accuses Jacob of acting foolishly by failing to let him have a party for him, his daughters and grandchildren and this too is hypocrisy. The fact that he calls Jacob foolish reveals that he did not want to have a farewell party for Jacob and reveals his bitterness.

Laban accusatory words and hypocrisy and quick temper reveal to everybody that he is in fact the fool and not Jacob. Laban’s hypocrisy and false accusations reveal that he is a fool.

Proverbs 12:23, “A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.”

Genesis 31:29

“It is in my power to do you (plural form of pronominal suffix meaning

“every one of you”) harm, but the God of your father spoke to me last night, saying, ‘Be careful not to speak either good or bad to Jacob.’”

Laban then boasts that not only that he was able to do harm to Jacob but also his entire household as indicated by the plural form of the pronominal suffix meaning “every one of you.” Therefore, we see that Laban had every intention of not only

harming Jacob but also his own daughters and grandchildren until the Lord warned him not to. However, in view of his dream where the Lord warned him to not harm Jacob, he knew this was an empty threat.

Laban's claim that it was in his power to do harm to Jacob and his entire household reveals the fact that he had every intention of harming Jacob and this is confirmed by the intense way in which he pursued him for three hundred miles. The fact that Laban admits that God had warned him not to harm Jacob also reveals that Laban's intention was to harm Jacob since God would not have given such a warning unless Laban had every intention of harming Jacob.

Laban apparently considers Jacob to be a servant under his authority by stating it was in his power to do harm to Jacob. However, the Lord has revealed to Laban in the dream that Jacob was under his authority and would not be touched!

In fact, Laban has to acknowledge that he is under God's authority since he obeys the Lord's command to not harm Jacob. Laban recognizes that there is no point in carrying this particular line of questioning and conversation any further so he abruptly changes the subject in order to render another accusation and slander of Jacob's character.

Genesis 31:30

“Now you have indeed gone away because you longed greatly for your father's house; but why did you steal my gods?”

Laban's acknowledgement that God had intervened and warned him to not harm Jacob would have made Jacob relax for a moment thinking that Laban is through with his harangue. However, Laban is always full of surprises and saves the worst of all accusations for last, namely, that Jacob has stolen his household idols.

Laban tries to justify his actions to some point and acknowledges to Jacob that he realizes that he wanted to return to Isaac and that this was a good enough reason to leave Paddan Aram.

His third accusation, “why did you steal my gods?” is also without any evidence and slanders Jacob's character and accuses him of idolatry.

Genesis 31:19 reveals that it was Rachel and not Jacob who was guilty of stealing Laban's idols. Laban's accusation is also ridiculous since Laban knew full well that Jacob would have nothing to do with his household idols since he worshiped *Yahweh* who prohibited household idols in his home.

Jacob would have nothing to do with Laban's household idols since he did not place any value on them since he had a relationship and fellowship with the Living God who made promises to him and had fulfilled those promises.

Genesis 31:31-35 records Jacob's response to Laban's accusations as well as Rachel's deceiving her father Laban.

Genesis 31:31

“Then Jacob replied to Laban, ‘Because I was afraid, for I thought that you would take your daughters from me by force.’”

Jacob responds to Laban's first two accusations: (1) Genesis 31:26: “Why did you flee secretly and steal away from me?” (2) Genesis 31:27: “What have you done by deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword?”

He does not respond immediately to Laban's third accusation that appears in Genesis 31:30, “Why did you steal my gods?” Jacob does not immediately answer Laban's charge of stealing his household idols in order that he might set the record straight before both Laban's men and his own household exactly why he had left suddenly and secretly. He states to everyone that if he had attempted to leave openly that he was afraid and for good reason that Laban would have tried to take his daughters and their children back from him by force.

This statement reveals that Jacob's sin was not that he left Laban secretly but that he left secretly out fear of Laban, and which fear was a sin because it was due to a lack of faith in God's promise to him that he would protect him (See Genesis 28:15) and would be with him (See Genesis 28:15 31:3).

Genesis 31:32

“The one with whom you find your gods shall not live; in the presence of our kinsmen point out what is yours among my belongings and

take it for yourself. For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.”

Jacob makes the statement “the one with whom you find your gods shall not live” because he could not believe that anyone in his family would do such a thing, much less his wife Rachel.

The fact that his wife Rachel was guilty would have greatly embarrassed Jacob and would have made Laban look justified before everyone in chasing down Jacob.

In the days of Laban and Jacob, the theft of household idols was a capital crime and guilty of death, which is indicated by Jacob’s statement that the one found with the stolen household gods would be put to death. So unknowingly, Jacob pronounces a death sentence upon Rachel his wife. So the suspense heightens for the reader since unlike Jacob, the reader knows that Rachel is the thief in the family.

The prepositional phrase “in the presence of our kinsmen” indicates that Jacob is calling the family of Laban and Jacob to be witnesses in this dispute between Jacob and Laban and to prevent Laban from making any accusations of a cover-up.

Jacob proposes that if anything of Laban’s has been found stolen, then it shall be returned to its owner.

Genesis 31:33

“So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into Leah's tent and into the tent of the two maids, but he did not find them. Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent.”

The search for the teraphim was focused upon the tents of Leah and Rachel and their maids, Zilpah and Bilhah since they were the ones who would have had access to the room in their father’s tent where the teraphim were kept.

Laban goes to Rachel’s tent last because he suspected her least of all and yet she was the guilty party. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the narrator Moses keeps the reader in suspense revealing that Laban searched all the tents in which the reader already knows the teraphim will not be found so that subsequently, the discovering in Rachel’s tent seems inevitable.

Genesis 31:34

“Now Rachel had taken the household idols and put them in the camel's saddle, and she sat on them. And Laban felt through all the tent but did not find them.”

“Household idols” is the noun *teraphim* (<yt!u*r+T!) (ter-aw-feme), which were small idols like figurines and were considered the family gods, which gave the family protection and were kept on a god-shelf and were outlawed in Israel (See 1 Samuel 15:23; 19:13; 2 Kings 23:24; Zechariah 10:2f.).

To add further suspense to the story, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit avoids telling the reader until the last possible moment that Rachel had hidden the teraphim in her camel’s saddle to prevent their discovery by Laban.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on the camel’s saddle, writes, “A relief from Tell Halif in northern Syria (900 B.C.) shows a camel driver with a stick in his right hand, fully and securely seated on a boxlike saddle. The box, about 18 inches long and 14 inches high, is bound by straps to the camel and serves as both a riding saddle and a pack saddle” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 430, Zondervan).

The fact that Rachel sat on the household idols demonstrates her contempt for her father’s household idols and that she did not steal them for herself.

Why did Rachel steal the household idols? As we note earlier in this study of Genesis 31, the obvious reason is that by taking away her father’s household idols, she was taking away his protection from his perspective, which the idols were thought to give. Also, we have noted that another explanation supported by the text and archaeology relates her theft to a practice during the days of the patriarchs that is mentioned Hurrian texts found in a place called “Nuzi,” which is about 10 miles southwest of modern Kirkuk in northeastern Iraq.

These Hurrian texts included about 5,000 tables from family archives from approximately 1500 B.C. and they give us insight into life in the days of the patriarchs. According to these documents from Nuzi, possession of the household gods was

connected to inheritance and property rights of their owner. Therefore, Rachel stole the household gods in order to establish a future claim on Laban's family inheritance. She thought by possessing them would somehow help validate the legitimacy of her husband's title to the flocks he had acquired while serving Laban and represent the inheritance she had a right to expect. The household gods were a token of rightful claim to the possessions and the headship of the family.

Rachel must have felt justified in stealing these gods and in expecting to share in the family inheritance. After all, this is what she and Leah had just affirmed to Jacob: Genesis 31:14, "Rachel and Leah said to him, 'Do we still have any portion or inheritance in our father's house?'"

From Rachel's perspective, getting Laban's wealth was God's will and if that was the case with the matter of the flocks which Jacob had been tending, why should it not be true of the estate at Laban's death?

Genesis 31:35

"She said to her father, 'Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me.' So he searched but did not find the household idols."

Rachel's statement "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you for the manner of women is upon me" means that she was having her monthly period.

Whether she was or not, the Scriptures do not reveal. Under the Mosaic Law, women who were having their period were ceremonially unclean (See Leviticus 15:19-30). This statement was Rachel's final act of retribution for the fraud Laban perpetrated on her and Jacob on what was to have been their wedding day and it was also retribution for Laban taking her bride price. So Rachel deceives her father, thus Laban reaped what he sowed.

Laban sowed the seeds of deception by sending Leah into Jacob's tent rather than Rachel and thus he reaped deception when Rachel deceived him into thinking that she did not have the teraphim. Rachel's deception of her father reveals that the fruit does not fall too far from the tree.

Laban does not ask her to get off the camel for a couple of reasons.

Nahum Sarna, writes, "He cannot approach Rachel and he cannot possibly imagine that she would sit on his "gods" in a state of menstrual impurity. The ancients widely regarded menstrual flow as a potently contaminating substance and the menstruant was thought to be possessed by evil spirits, thus requiring her separation from other persons" (Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary*, page 219, The Jewish Publication Society).

According to ancient law, the futility of Laban's search for his property constitutes presumptive proof of Jacob's innocence (Nahum Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, page 219, The Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 31:36-42 contains Jacob's speech before Laban and all their relatives, which is delivered with ferocious intensity and summarizes his twenty years with Laban. In Genesis 31:36-38, Jacob demonstrates his innocence from being wrongly accused of stealing the teraphim in the present and his innocence in the past in not stealing from Laban's flocks. In Genesis 31:39-40, he presents to his audience the difficult conditions he had to work under. In Genesis 31:41-42, Jacob appeals to God's vindication of him in the past and in the present in Laban's dream.

Genesis 31:36

"Then Jacob became angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob said to Laban, 'What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?'"

Genesis 31:37

"Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my kinsmen and your kinsmen, that they may decide between us two."

Genesis 31:38

"These twenty years I have been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, nor have I eaten the rams of your flocks."

When Laban's search does not turn up anything, Jacob flies off the handle. Jacob's emotions had been building up over the years and all of a sudden they come to a boiling point. Even Laban, who probably was a bully and a rough character, is taken back momentarily. Both men know that Jacob is under divine protection. So Jacob can afford to blow up.

Genesis 31:36-42 are Jacob's testimony of twenty years of pent-up emotions. He has been cheated and used and treated as dirt. Laban had been a hard taskmaster and Jacob a very conscientious servant. So we see Jacob reveling in his innocence in addition to the assurance he gained from Laban's report that God had spoken to him in the night, preventing harm to Jacob.

In the light of these events Jacob now seemed to have the upper hand or in other words, he held the winning cards, and he planned to use them to greatest advantage. The years of friction between these two men now boiled over as Jacob scalded Laban with righteous indignation. Jacob was angry and called for a judgment scene. He knew he was totally innocent and he felt the suspicions of his father-in-law were unfair and unjustified. He felt that Laban had made up the story of the stolen teraphim as an excuse to search his possessions.

In Genesis 31:36-38 Jacob presents his case to his household and Laban's clan, thus before all their relatives. Jacob presents several rhetorical questions to his audience in order to present his innocence and to assure that his reputation in Paddan Aram remains intact.

In Genesis 31:36, Jacob's questions, "What is my transgression? What is my sin that you have hotly pursued me?" demonstrate his innocence before God and that his conduct towards Laban in the eyes of God has been impeccable.

Jacob's question, "Though you have felt through all my goods, what have you found of all your household goods?" appeals to his audience that Laban's accusation that he stole his household gods has been proven wrong, and that he is innocent.

Jacob proposes that if Laban found anything that belonged to him, he should set it before all their relatives and let them judge what to do. The tables

have been turned where Jacob has gone from being the accused to being the aggrieved party.

Jacob's statement recorded in Genesis 31:38 indicates that just as Laban cannot justly accuse Jacob of stealing his teraphim so he cannot fault Jacob in the care of Laban's flocks.

Jacob reveals that none of Laban's ewes or female goats miscarried, which was due to his conscientiousness and tender care of Laban's flocks as well as the Lord's blessing.

Jacob reveals that he never ate from Laban's flocks and thus has not stolen any of Laban's property.

Genesis 31:39

"That which was torn of beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself. You required it of my hand whether stolen by day or stolen by night."

Jacob reveals further of his great integrity in dealing with Laban and that he states that he even bore losses that were really not his fault, and for which he was not legally responsible according to the law of Hammurabi coming from this period demonstrates and from the Mosaic Law as well (See Exodus 22:10-11).

Genesis 31:39 reveals that Jacob is not taking credit for doing more than the law demanded but rather he is accusing Laban of violation of Near Eastern law and custom, which absolved a shepherd of personal responsibility in a case of a beast killing a sheep, provided he could supply the carcass of the dead sheep. Though he was liable for lost or stolen sheep, he was not liable for sheep torn by predators.

Henry M. Morris, writes, "It was customary that when a shepherd brought a torn animal to his master that this was regarded as evidence that he had defended the sheep and had driven the beast away and that he had done all he could to save the sheep; under these circumstances, the master bore the loss, rather than the shepherd. Jacob however had borne all the losses himself, evidently by replacing lost animals from Laban's flocks with animals from his own flocks" (The Genesis Record, page 488, Baker Book House).

Genesis 31:40

“Thus I was: by day the heat consumed me and the frost by night, and my sleep fled from my eyes.”

In Genesis 31:40, Jacob reveals the terrible conditions he had to work under at times and that he was very conscientious in tending to Laban’s flocks. The fact that Jacob had been exposed to extreme weather conditions reveals that Jacob who once was a homebody and a momma’s boy has been toughened up under Laban’s school of hard knocks and has been trained for leadership away from home.

Genesis 31:41

“These twenty years I have been in your house; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters and six years for your flock, and you changed my wages ten times.”

Jacob demonstrates great tactfulness and consideration for his wives in that he does not mention Laban sending Leah and not Rachel into his tent on his wedding night after he had just worked seven years for Laban to marry Rachel.

Jacob’s statement that Laban changed his wages “ten” times is a figure implying “enough is enough” since in the Bible the number ten signifies the perfection of the divine order, thus implying that from God’s perspective, Laban had cheated him long enough and now God is intervening and commanding him to leave Laban.

Throughout Jacob’s twenty years of service for Laban, he never once was rewarded for his conscientious and faithful and diligent service but rather was cheated time again by Laban.

Genesis 31:42

“If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had not been for me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands, so He rendered judgment last night.”

In Genesis 31:36-42, Jacob has presented evidence that the real thief in his relationship with Laban is not himself but rather Laban. Jacob states that even though Laban has been unjust in his treatment of him, God has not and has blessed him despite Laban’s unscrupulous behavior.

Even though Laban had not rewarded him for his hard work, God had done so. God overruled Laban’s intention to send Jacob away empty handed.

The expression “the fear of Isaac” refers to the fact that Isaac reverentially worshipped God and had a relationship and close intimate fellowship with God who has ruled in Jacob’s favor.

Jacob’s statement that if God had not intervened on his behalf that Laban would have sent him away empty handed reveals that Laban is guilty of not paying his workers.

Jacob’s statement “God has seen my affliction” is Jacob’s acknowledgement that God has demonstrated that His love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desired and did act to alleviate Jacob’s pain and suffering and was removing its cause, which was Laban (See Genesis 16:13; 1 John 3:16-17). This statement echoes Hagar’s statement recorded in Genesis 16:13 where the Lord delivered her in Ishmael in the desert after the two were dismissed from the home of Abraham and Sarah. It also echoes the statement made by Leah recorded in Genesis 29:32 when she named her firstborn son Reuben.

Jacob’s statement “so He (God) rendered judgment last night” refers to Laban’s dream the night before, which is recorded in Genesis 31:24, and which dream Laban acknowledged to Jacob as recorded in Genesis 31:29.

Jacob’s statement “so He (God) rendered judgment last night” means that God has ruled in his favor by intervening on his behalf by means of a dream, and prohibited Laban from speaking anything positive or negative to Jacob that would prevent his leaving Paddan Aram and heading back home to Canaan.

This statement indicates that Laban’s dream confirms to Laban that it was God’s will that Jacob depart from Paddan Aram and leave for Canaan. Jacob’s statement recorded in Genesis 31:42, reveals that Jacob acknowledges that the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac has ruled in his favor and provided for him and protected him.

Jacob’s experience in Paddan Aram with Laban foreshadows his descendants, the nation of Israel

experience in Egypt under Pharaoh. Jacob's experience of servitude for the hard taskmaster Laban and the blessing he received while in service to Laban as well as his deliverance from this servitude by God anticipates and foreshadows the experience his descendants, the nation of Israel, will experience while in Egypt under Pharaoh.

Just as Jacob served a cruel and hard master, Laban, so Jacob's descendants, the nation of Israel will serve Pharaoh of Egypt. Just as Jacob was blessed by God during this time of servitude to Laban so Israel will be blessed during their time of servitude in Egypt. Just as Jacob was commanded by God to leave Laban and was thus delivered from his servitude so Israel was commanded by God to leave Egypt and was thus delivered from the hardship of Egypt and the hard taskmaster, Pharaoh.

Genesis 31:43-55 presents to us the record of Laban's response to Jacob's scathing rebuke, which is to propose a non-aggression pact with Jacob at Mizpah.

Up to this point in our study of the book of Genesis, this non-aggression pact between Jacob and Laban will be the third non-aggression pact that the patriarchs have agreed to (See Genesis 21:22-24; 26:26-33).

Genesis 31:43

“Then Laban replied to Jacob, ‘The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?’”

Now that Laban has been publicly exposed by Jacob's testimony recorded in Genesis 31:35-42, Laban pitifully attempts to cover his loss of face with empty rhetoric, hypocrisy, and self-righteous arrogance and emotion.

Laban attempted once again to turn the tables on Jacob and make him out to be the bad guy by diverting attention from Jacob's embarrassing facts by changing the subject.

Laban's first claim, “the daughters are my daughters” is a true statement but they are now

married to Jacob and are no longer under his authority but Jacob's since he is husband of both Rachel and Leah now.

Laban's second claim, “the children are my children” is true only in the sense that Jacob's children are Laban's grandchildren but that does not give Laban the right to take these children back with him.

Laban's third claim, “the flocks are my flocks” is also false since it totally ignores the contract that he made with Jacob in which he agreed to Jacob's proposal that Jacob would receive all the “striped, spotted, speckled” sheep and goats and dark colored sheep that were born of Laban's solid colored animals (See Genesis 30:25-43).

Laban's claim “the flocks are my flocks” demonstrates Laban's failure to acknowledge that God had blessed Jacob and was responsible for Jacob's prosperity from this contract (See Genesis 31:11-12).

Laban's fourth claim, “all that you see is mine” is also totally false and therefore another lie from his lips since all the prosperity that Jacob had, came from God and not Laban.

As we saw in Genesis 30:25-36, Laban had provided Jacob with nothing and had given him no property and had cheated Jacob on his wages. The property that Jacob left Paddan Aram with was accumulated during his last six years of service to Laban and was part of the contract that Laban agreed to with Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 30:25-36. Therefore, the truth of the matter is that Laban gave Jacob nothing and that God had prospered Jacob and had given Jacob everything.

Laban has been attempting to make himself appear as the reason for Jacob's success and so in effect he is saying to Jacob, “you were nothing until you met me and worked for me!”

Laban's rhetorical question, which demands a negative response, “But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?” expresses Laban's frustration at not being able to take revenge on Jacob since God had warned Laban in a dream to not harm Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 31:24 and acknowledged by Laban as recorded in Genesis 31:29.

Genesis 31:44

“So now come, let us make a covenant, you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me.”

By proposing a covenant, Laban is in effect capitulating to Jacob and acknowledging his defeat in his case against Jacob. A foundational concept of a covenant is the notion of a legal contract, which was developed to establish and regulate a relationship where none previously existed. Therefore, we see Laban seeking to establish and regulate a peaceful coexistence between himself and Jacob where one previously did not exist.

Genesis 31:45

“Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.”

“Pillar” is the noun *matstsevah* (hb*x@m^) (mats-say-vaw), which denotes a single upright stone pillar set up as a monument and a memorial to mark the boundaries between Laban on the north and Jacob on the south.

Jacob erected three pillars in his life to mark the three great turning points in his life: (1) His first encounter with the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 28:18) (2) Departure from Laban and return to Canaan (Genesis 31:45) (3) His second encounter with the Lord at Bethel (Genesis 35:14).

In Genesis 31:45, Jacob erected a memorial to stand as a witness to the oral contract between him and his uncle Laban and called it “Galeed,” which is the Hebrew term for “witness heap.”

The employment of piled stones serves as an eternal witness against one who would dare to break the treaty made between the parties, a common Near Eastern practice.

This treaty was a formal one, employing several elements: (1) The grounds delineated by the treaty (2) Invoking divine witnesses (3) A curse for breaking the agreement, which was insured in the case of Jacob and Laban by the presence of God (4) A meal before the witnessing heap, confirming the acceptance of the terms by both parties.

The stones used in this passage also represent another common ancient Near Eastern legal practice, namely that of establishing boundary stones to demarcate territory. These stones marked

the extension of territory under the jurisdiction of a ruler, the extent of a private plot, and in some cases, served as a public proclamation that land had been transferred. Presumably, the boundary marked by the stones was the limit of Jacob’s property as Gilead would later become part of the nation of Israel.

Genesis 31:46

“Jacob said to his kinsmen, ‘Gather stones.’ So they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap.”

Genesis 31:47

“Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed.”

In his native language, which is Aramaic, Laban gave the heap of stones the name “Jegar-sahadutha,” which means, “witness heap.”

In his native language, which is Hebrew, Jacob gave the heap of stones the name “Galeed,” which also means, “witness heap.”

The fact that Jacob gave the heap of stones a Hebrew name indicates that he is identifying himself with the Promised Land, the land of Canaan. The fact that Laban gave the heap of stones an Aramaic name and Jacob a Hebrew one reveals that Laban and Jacob are now two distinct people, each speaking their own language.

Genesis 31:48-49

“Laban said, ‘This heap is a witness between you and me this day.’ Therefore it was named Galeed, and Mizpah, for he said, ‘May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other.’”

Genesis 31:50

“If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me.”

Genesis 31:51

“Laban said to Jacob, ‘Behold this heap and behold the pillar which I have set between you and me.’”

Genesis 31:52

“This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.”

By invoking the name of Jacob’s God, Laban was implying that Jacob was the one who needed to be watched and this was the responsibility of the God of Jacob. Laban’s gods would not need to do anything since he was a man of his word, which of course was a joke.

The witness heap was also given the name “Mizpah,” meaning “watchtower” since Laban did not trust Jacob, which is a case of Laban projecting onto Jacob his own failure and the fact he himself can’t be trusted. Therefore, Laban is saying, “I do not trust you Jacob and since I won’t be hear to watch you, then may the Lord keep watch.”

This treaty was not a promise between friends but a warning between antagonists who did not trust each other. They called on God to keep each other true to the terms of the covenant they had just made and so therefore, this covenant is a “non-aggression” pact.

Laban’s statement “If you mistreat my daughters” is hypocrisy on his part again in the sense that he made a pretense of having concern for his daughters’ safety, which he did not possess as demonstrated by his treatment of his daughters as expressed by his daughters in Genesis 31:14-16.

Notice in Genesis 31:51 how Laban states that he claims to have built this pillar and heap of stones when in reality it was Jacob and his family according to Genesis 31:46 and so we see that once again Laban always claims what he has not done or does not belong to him and is therefore delusional.

Genesis 31:51-52 manifests another element of a treaty common in ancient Near Eastern legal practice, namely, that of establishing boundary stones to demarcate territory. The boundary marked by the stones was the limit of Jacob’s property as Gilead would later become part of the nation of Israel.

Genesis 31:53

“The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us. So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac.”

Genesis 31:53 manifests two more elements of a treaty in ancient Near Eastern practice, namely the invoking divine witnesses, a curse for breaking the agreement, which was insured in the case of Jacob and Laban by the presence of God. Laban added an oath to the covenant by calling on the God of Abraham and the gods of Nahor, the gods of their father to judge between Jacob and Laban, which indicates how great a split this is between the two families of Laban and Jacob.

The phrase “the God of Nahor” should be translated “the gods of Nahor” for two reasons: (1) Laban was still a polytheist as evidenced by his household gods that Rachel stole. (2) The plural form of the verb *shaphat* (ʃpʰv*) (shaw-fat), means “they will judge.”

Jacob ignored the gods of Nahor and took his oath only in the name of the true and living God who was worshipped by Isaac, his father and grandfather Abraham as indicated by the statement that “Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac.” This statement expresses Jacob’s faith in the God of his father Isaac indicating that he is identifying with the God his father Isaac who reverentially worshipped God and possessed an eternal relationship and close intimate fellowship with Him.

Genesis 31:54

“Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his kinsmen to the meal; and they ate the meal and spent the night on the mountain.”

Genesis 31:54 manifests the final element of a treaty in ancient Near Eastern practice, namely that partaking of a meal between the parties before the witnessing heap, confirming the acceptance of the terms by both parties.

Genesis 31:55

“Early in the morning Laban arose, and kissed his sons and his daughters and blessed them. Then Laban departed and returned to his place.”

So we see the covenant ceremony has been concluded resulting in peace between Laban and Jacob. Laban's chase of Jacob has ended in a covenant guaranteeing respect for each other's family and territory in the future and so therefore, Laban heads home to Paddan Aram and Jacob to Canaan.

Laban did not altogether lack affection for his own family as demonstrated that he kissed his grandsons and daughters goodbye and gave them a blessing. He must have known that his daughters had come to resent him and he was probably feeling guilty about that.

Notice, he was so arrogant and proud that he could not bring himself to apologize to his daughters and Jacob.

So Laban walks off the pages of Scriptures here since never again do we hear of him. He was governed and controlled by the old Adamic sin nature and the cosmic system, which he loved.

Laban encountered the true and living God in a dream and had witnessed the reality of God in the life of Jacob and was even blessed by God due to his association with Jacob.

Unfortunately, this did not lead to the bowing of his will and trusting in Christ as His Savior since he continued in idolatry and covetousness and involved in the god of materialism.

Genesis 32

Genesis 32:1-2 presents to us the record of Jacob encountering the angels of God as he was returning to the land of Canaan and naming the place, "Mahanaim," which means, "This is God's camp."

In this chapter, we see Jacob leaving behind forever his problems with Laban but now he has to confront his past and Esau who he cheated out of the blessing of the birthright.

We saw in Genesis 31 Jacob escaping one conflict with Laban but now in Genesis 32, we see him returning to another conflict, namely his unresolved feud with his twin brother Esau.

So we see that Jacob had two great enemies, one that resided outside the Promised Land in Laban and the other in the Promised Land, that being

Esau. Esau typifies the believer's enemy within, that being the old Adamic sin nature and Laban typifies the believer's enemy from without, that being the cosmic system of Satan.

As soon as Jacob made his way through the mountains of Gilead, after triumphing over Laban and separating from him by the Mizpah monument, his thoughts would soon turn to his old adversary, Esau.

If you recall, his mother Rebekah said that she would send for Jacob after Esau had cooled down (Genesis 27:45). However, Jacob never heard from her during the twenty years in Paddan Aram. Either she was ill or died and was therefore not able to call him back or Esau was still threatening to kill Jacob.

Also, at this time, Jacob probably thought that his father Isaac had died since prior to leaving his family, the entire family was anticipating that his death would be soon. So Jacob was facing an uncertain future just as he was when he left Canaan.

The reader in Genesis 32 finds a potentially dangerous conflict taking place between the two brothers but the anticipation of this encounter creates an opportunity to drive Jacob to prayer to solve the potential problem. But before Jacob meets Esau, he has two unexpected meetings, one with the elect angels of God who have been protecting him while in exile, which is recorded in Genesis 31:1-2 and the other with the preincarnate Christ, which is recorded in Genesis 32:22-32.

These two meetings, one with the angels and the other with the preincarnate Christ were designed to reassure Jacob of God's protection and presence when he encounters Esau. These two encounters with the angels and the Lord mark the second and third turning points in the life of Jacob, with the first being of course, his encounter with the Lord at Bethel.

Each time that Jacob encounters the angels of God and the preincarnate Christ, he memorializes it by constructing a pillar, the first at Bethel (28:19), the second at Mahanaim (32:2) and the third at Peniel (32:30).

The first encounter with the angels of God and the preincarnate Christ as recorded in Genesis 28:10-

15 prepared him to meet Laban and the second encounter prepares him to meet Esau.

The outline of Genesis 32 is as follows: (1) Angels of God meet Jacob at Mahanaim (32:1-2) (2) Jacob sends messengers to Esau (32:3-6) (3) Jacob divides his family out of fear of Esau (32:7-8) (4) Jacob prays for protection from Esau and claims covenant promises of God (32:9-12) (5) Jacob sends gifts to Esau (32:13-21) (6) Jacob sends family across Jabbok (32:22-23) (7) Jacob prays as he wrestles the God-Man, Jesus Christ at Peniel (32:24-32).

In Genesis 33:1-17 we see Jacob finally encountering Esau and the two men reconciling with each other. Therefore, Genesis 32 can be described as “God Prepares Jacob to Meet Esau.”

Now, in Genesis 32:1-2, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit opens the story of Jacob meeting Esau by presenting the vertical dimension (God, the angels and Jacob) of the story before the horizontal (Jacob and Esau).

In these two verses, we see the same elect angels of God that met Jacob as he left the land of Canaan (Genesis 28:10-15), now meet him upon his return. Genesis 32:1-2 and Genesis 28:10-15 are correlated since what took place at Bethel on Jacob’s way out of the land of Canaan now took place on his way back to that land.

Jacob’s vision of these angels in Genesis 32:1-2 would reassure him once again of the divine presence and protection. What the Holy Spirit through Moses wants us to see and understand is this entire situation between Jacob and Esau is to be viewed from two perspectives, the divine and human and that before Jacob can reconcile with Esau, he must persevere in prayer with God so that God can resolve Jacob’s problem with Esau.

Genesis 32:1

“Now as Jacob went on his way, the angels of God met him.”

“Angels” is the noun *mal’akh* (Ea*|+m^)(mal-awk), which means, “messenger” is used in the Old Testament with reference to “elect” angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the “preincarnate” Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1).

The phrase “angels of God” refers to the elect angels of God since: (1) If the preincarnate Christ were in view, the singular form of the noun *mal’akh* would be used and not the plural form as it is here. (2) Jacob names the place “the camp (army) of God” ruling out a reference to human beings. (3) The noun *Elohim*, “God” stands in apposition to the noun *mal’akh*, “angels.”

We have seen in our past studies in the book of Genesis that the elect angels are employed by God to guard (Genesis 3:24), to communicate with God’s people (Genesis 18:1) and to protect God’s people (Genesis 19:1-22; 28:10-15).

Angels are created spirit beings (Ps. 148:2, 5) in eternity past, (Job 38:4, 7) since the Lord Jesus Christ created the angels in eternity past (Col. 1:16). They are in eternity (present) a higher category of beings than humans are (Heb. 2:6-7), however, in eternity (future), redeemed humans will be a higher category of beings than the angels (Ps. 8:4-5).

The doctrine of positional sanctification states that the church age believer is positionally higher than the angels by virtue of their union with Christ through the Baptism of the Spirit, which takes place at the moment of salvation (Ephesians 2:6).

There are innumerable angels (He. 12:22) and they do not die and neither does their number increase or decrease (Lu. 20:36).

There are now 2 categories of angels in the cosmos: (1) Elect (2) Non-elect or fallen.

The elect angels of God are arranged in ranks as well as the fallen or non-elect angels (Ephesians 6:12).

The elect angels: (1) Protect (2) Provide (3) Proclaim the Word of God (4) Execute God’s Judgments.

In Relation to the Church: Hebrews 1:14 describes ministry of the elect-angels “servant-spirits who are divinely commissioned and repeatedly dispatched for service on behalf of those who are destined to inherit salvation.”

In this, however, Scripture points to a number of specific ministries: (1) The elect-angels bring answers to prayer (Acts 12:5-10). (2) They help in bringing people to the Savior (Acts 8:26; 10:3). (3)

They may encourage in times of danger (Acts 27:23-24). (4) They care for God's people at the time of death (Luke 16:22).

Therefore, the presence of these elect angels would be a sign to Jacob of God's presence and protection from Esau and would therefore be a great encouragement to Jacob as he made his way back home. This vision of angels would reassure Jacob that God cares for him and was also still accessible to him as he encountered his brother Esau.

"Met" is the verb *pagha* (ug^P*) (paw-gah), which conveys that Jacob's encounter with these elect angels of God would result in a reconciliation with Esau.

Just as the angels appeared to Jacob in order to reassure him as he was leaving Canaan facing an unknown future (from the human perspective) and preparing to meet his deceitful uncle Laban who cheated him so the angels appear to Jacob again in order to reassure him as he faces the unknown (from the human perspective) and prepares to meet his old adversary, his twin brother Esau.

Notice that the angels initiated the encounter in that they met Jacob and not vice versa and that is because God whose authority the angels are under, is a God of love, who always initiates so as to motivate a worshipful response (See 1 John 4:19).

Genesis 32:2

"Jacob said when he saw them, 'This is God's camp.' So he named that place Mahanaim."

"Camp" is the noun *machaneh* (hn#j&m^) (makh-an-eh), which refers to a "military encampment" for the elect angels of God as indicated by the statement that the angels of God met Jacob in his journey home to Canaan.

"Mahanaim" is the proper noun *machanayim* (<y!n^j&m^) (makh-ah-na-yim), which means, "two camps," referring to Jacob's human encampment and the angels encampment and was located on the Jabbok River, along which the major east-west trade route connecting the Trans-jordan King's Highway and the coastal Via Maris run.

Man cannot see angels for they are invisible but can be seen by man when God takes one of two

actions: (1) He lifts the veil of the spiritual dimension (2 Kin. 6:17). (2) He allows them to change their form to human (Heb. 13:2).

In Genesis 28:10-15 and 32:1-2, we see God lifting the veil of the invisible spiritual dimension, which He has done several times throughout history.

The prophet Elisha and his servant had the veil of the spiritual dimension lifted for them. The name "Elisha" (uv*y!!a\$) means, "God is salvation," or "God saves." He was the son of Shaphat from the town of Abel Meholoah (1 K. 19:16) and was originally a farmer (1 K. 19:19) and had a home in Samaria (2 K. 2:25; 5:3, 9; 6:32) and was evidently bald (1 K. 2:23) and employed a staff to walk (2 K. 4:29).

In the 9th century B.C. Elisha succeeded Elijah the prophet and ministered primarily to the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Elijah upon God's command, anointed Elisha to succeed him (1 K. 19:16f).

Elisha was willing to serve Elijah and learn from him so that he might be prepared for this work that God commissioned him to do (1 K. 19:20-21) and remained with Elijah until the latter was taken up to heaven by the Lord (2 K. 2:1-18).

Elisha then took up Elijah's mantle and work and during his prophetic ministry, he exposed and confronted idolatry, injustice, immorality and impiety among God's people (1 K. 19:17; 2 K. 2:24; 5:20-27; 7:17-20).

Elisha also spent much of his time reaching out to those in need and demonstrated to these needy individuals the power and compassion of God (2 K. 4:1-5:14; 8:1-6; Lk. 4:27). The miracles Elisha performed helped his fellow countrymen come to know the Lord better, trust Him more and obey His Law (2 K. 2:14, 19-22; 3:15-20; 5:15, 17-19; 6:1-7:3; 13:21).

Elisha functioned as a prophet in Israel for over 50 years which encompassed the reigns of Jehoram, Jehu, Jehoahaz and Jehoash, from 850 B.C. to 800 B.C.

In 2 Kings 6 we have Elisha and his servant encountering danger in Dothan. The king of Syria had been engaged in war against Israel and was extremely disturbed because every plan he had

made and every place he went was discovered by the king of Israel.

Elisha was bugging the king of Syria's quarters but not by the means employed by the FBI and CIA but rather the Lord was telling Elisha everything the king of Syria was planning to do militarily.

Finally one of the servants of the king of Syria is told by a servant that Elisha was the culprit so the king dispatches some troops to capture Elisha. This is where we pick up the story.

2 King 6:8-18

"Now the king of Aram was warring against Israel; and he counseled with his servants saying, 'In such and such a place shall be my camp.'"

"The man of God sent {word} to the king of Israel saying, 'Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Arameans are coming down there.'"

"The king of Israel sent to the place about which the man of God had told him; thus he warned him, so that he guarded himself there, more than once or twice."

"Now the heart of the king of Aram was enraged over this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, 'Will you tell me which of us is for the king of Israel?'"

"One of his servants said, 'No, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom.'"

"So he said, 'Go and see where he is, that I may send and take him.' And it was told him, saying, 'Behold, he is in Dothan.'"

"He sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city."

"Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, 'Alas, my master! What shall we do?'"

"So he answered, 'Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.'"

"Then Elisha prayed and said, 'O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.' And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

"When they came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD and said, 'Strike this people with blindness, I pray.' So He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha."

Psalm 68:17, "The chariots of God are myriads, thousands upon thousands."

Psalm 104:4, "He makes the winds His messengers, flaming fire His ministers."

Psalm 78:49, "He sent upon them His burning anger, fury and indignation and trouble, a band of destroying angels."

Psalm 91:11, "For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways."

Psalm 103:20, "Bless the LORD, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the voice of His word!"

Genesis 32:3-6 records Jacob sending a delegation to his brother Esau in order to communicate to him his desire to reconcile with him.

Genesis 32:3

"Then Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom."

Jacob sends this delegation to Esau in order to communicate that he wished to reconcile with him and that he had peaceful intentions towards Esau. The sending of this delegation reveals the sensitivity of Jacob since it was an attempt on Jacob's part to see things from Esau's perspective and was not motivated out of fear of Esau.

From Esau's perspective, when he heard that Jacob was migrating back to Canaan and with a large caravan and many possessions, he would be wondering of Jacob's intentions since in the past Jacob had hurt him.

Jacob realized that Esau would probably be very fearful and suspicious of him based upon his actions towards Esau in the past where he deceived his blind father into giving the blessing of the birthright to him rather than Esau.

Also, Jacob figured that Esau might think he had come to claim the prophecy of Genesis 25:23 that the “older shall serve the younger” and so therefore, he thought that it would be expedient to communicate to Esau that he did not desire to subjugate him and his family to himself.

Therefore, we see that Jacob had gained an appreciation of Esau’s feelings by being the victim himself of Laban’s treachery and deceitfulness. The divine discipline in the form of twenty years hard labor for Laban has affected a change of character in Jacob by driving out of the soul of Jacob the sinful patterns of deceitfulness and treachery and replaced them with kindness, gentleness, thoughtfulness and love and consideration for others.

Galatians 5:22-23, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

At this point neither man knows the intentions of the other but courageously Jacob initiates contact with Esau in order to calm whatever fears Esau might still have towards him based upon their difficult relationship in the past.

Jacob takes the initiative because he is operating in faith that God is with him and will protect him and if he didn’t have faith he wouldn’t have attempted to initiate contact with Esau but would have sought to enter the land of Canaan secretly.

The name “Seir,” demarcates the Edomite territory, which was situated at the southeast border of Palestine (Judges 11:17; Numbers 34:3) and was properly called “the land of Seir” (Genesis 36:8; Gen 32:3; Joshua 24:4; Ezekiel 35:3, 7, 15) and “the country of Edom.”

Merrill F. Unger, writes, “The physical geography of Edom is somewhat peculiar. Along the western base of the mountain range are low calcareous hills. These are succeeded by lofty masses of igneous rock, chiefly porphyry, over which lies red and variegated sandstone in irregular ridges

and abrupt cliffs with deep ravines between. The latter strata give the mountains their most striking features and remarkable colors. The average elevation of the summit is about two thousand feet above the sea. Along the eastern side runs an almost unbroken limestone ridge, a thousand feet or more higher than the other. This ridge sinks down with an easy slope into the plateau of the Arabian Desert. Although Edom is thus wild, rugged, and almost inaccessible, the deep glens and flat terraces along the mountainsides are covered with rich soil, from which trees, shrubs, and flowers now spring up luxuriantly” (From The New Unger's Bible Dictionary. Originally published by Moody Press of Chicago, Illinois. Copyright (c) 1988.).

Genesis 32:4-5

“He also commanded them saying, ‘Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: ‘Thus says your servant Jacob, ‘I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now; I have oxen and donkeys and flocks and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find favor in your sight.’”

At this point, Jacob does not know if Esau’s anger towards him has subsided or if he is still thinking revenge. As he was approaching Canaan, undoubtedly, Jacob would be thinking at least two things. One that his father was dead since when he left for Paddan Aram, his father’s death was considered imminent.

Secondly, he would have been thinking of what his mother Rebekah said to him when she informed him that Esau was planning to kill him after his father’s death. However, the assumption that Isaac’s death was imminent was proven wrong since Isaac lived another eighty years after Jacob left for Paddan Aram. Therefore, he informs the delegation to speak to Esau in deferential terms so as to convey to Esau that his intentions are peaceful and conciliatory.

Notice the deferential language that Jacob instructs the delegation to use when addressing Esau, “my lord” and “your servant.” He uses these deferential terms to convey to Esau that his intentions are peaceful and conciliatory and that he does not wish to claim the promise that “the older shall serve the younger.”

The deferential terms used by Jacob do not express his fear of Esau but rather his conciliatory attitude towards Esau since Jacob is the one who initiates the contact with his brother something he would not desire to do if he was afraid of Esau.

If he was afraid of Esau, he would have crept into Canaan secretly just as he left Laban secretly out of fear. However, instead we see him announcing his return in obedience to the Lord's command by sending this delegation with a peaceful and conciliatory message for Esau.

Robert Deffinbaugh, "The substance of his message to Esau was that he had returned a wealthy man. In this case he was not coming back in order to place a claim on his father's wealth. Jacob sought to assure Esau that his return was a friendly and non-threatening one. All that he sought was Esau's favor." (The Book of Genesis; Biblical Studies Press, 1997).

Bruce K. Waltke, "Although this introductory greeting conforms to the customary epistolary style of the ancient Near East, nevertheless, through this courtesy Jacob begins to right the arrogance toward his brother that brought him in diametrical opposition to his promised destiny (27:29). Like Abraham with Lot, Jacob takes the first step toward giving up the rights of his election to the blessing (13:1-12), trusting God to fulfill the promise. His rivalry with Esau is about over" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 442, Zondervan).

We must remember that Esau did not know Jacob's intentions either and did not know that Jacob had since changed from the last time that he spoke with him. Esau would have been thinking about the prophecy of Genesis 25:23 that the "older shall serve the younger" and so therefore, would have been wondering if Jacob had come to claim that promise and subjugate him and his family and take his possessions, thus, Jacob makes clear through this delegation that this is not his intention.

Jacob's statement "I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed until now" reveals to Esau the reason why he has not heard from him and also reveals his tact in that he omits the real reason why he left home to go to Paddan Aram, which was to avoid Esau's plot to kill him.

Jacob's statement "that I may find favor in your sight" expresses his desire to reconcile with his brother Esau.

Genesis 32:6

"The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and furthermore he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.'"

Evidently, it appears from the text of Genesis 32:6 that the delegation never made contact with Esau and never communicated Jacob's desire to reconcile with Esau since they are never said to speak with Esau. Therefore, it appears that the messengers only went far enough to discover that Esau was advancing toward them accompanied by four hundred men, which would understandably cause them to think that Esau had hostile intentions.

So the delegation never makes contact with Esau out of fear of him because they saw the four hundred men and immediately assumed that Esau's intentions were hostile and they conveyed that fear to Jacob by emphasizing the four hundred men.

The four hundred men was the standard size of a militia in the days of the patriarchs (1 Samuel 22:2; 25:13; 30:10; cf. Genesis 14:14).

The fact that the messengers state to Jacob that Esau is coming to meet him with four hundred men is rather ambiguous for two reasons.

Was Esau using the four hundred men to attack Jacob or to receive his brother royally and escort him into the land of Canaan?

Jacob would not be asking himself why the messengers were allowed to return unharmed and allow him to prepare himself since the messengers never made contact with Esau and never communicated with him.

Jacob's response to the news about Esau and his four hundred men, which is recorded in Genesis 32:7 indicates quite clearly that he was convinced that Esau had come to attack him.

News is known to travel with incredible speed in the Middle East as travelers have reported many times in the past. Esau would have been informed

about the arrival of Jacob's caravan through reconnaissance by his men.

Now, from Esau's perspective, based upon his past dealings with Jacob and his knowledge of the prophecy that the "older shall serve the younger" it is understandable that Esau protects himself and his family by going out to meet Jacob with four hundred men just in case Jacob's intentions are hostile. So Esau would have two questions in his mind, has Jacob come to attack me or is he coming with peaceful intentions? Therefore, Esau would have been arriving with the four hundred men for either one of two reasons, one to protect himself in case Jacob attacks him or to welcome home his brother royally and escort him on home to their father.

Both Esau and Jacob at this point are filled with uncertainty and anxiety as to what the intentions of the other might be. However, God has softened the heart of both men throughout the past twenty years because both have been prospered by God, thus setting the stage for reconciliation between the two rather than war.

Genesis 32:7-8 records Jacob responding to the report from his messengers that Esau was advancing towards him with four hundred men by dividing his family into two companies in order to save lives.

Also, Genesis 32:9-12 records Jacob praying for protection from Esau and claiming the covenant promises of God (32:9-12) in prayer in order to meet his fear of Esau.

Genesis 32:7-8

"Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people who were with him, and the flocks and the herds and the camels, into two companies; for he said, 'If Esau comes to the one company and attacks it, then the company which is left will escape.'"

The knowledge of Esau's desire to kill him, his inability to retreat because of the treaty with Laban, the fact that he was encumbered by small children and livestock cause Jacob to come to the conclusion that Esau's intention is to attack him.

In the event of an attack, all he can do is minimize his losses since he can't retreat and he is slowed

by the children and livestock. Jacob's fear of Esau does not paralyze him but in fact he keeps his head as evidenced by his acting decisively, which demonstrated great leadership. He expects the worst and so he makes every effort to avoid a total catastrophe.

To deal with this impending confrontation with Esau, Jacob takes three actions. Jacob's first act was to take defensive measures by splitting his party into two camps allowing at least the rear to escape, and which measures are recorded in Genesis 32:7-8. Jacob's second act was offensive, which was to pray to the Father for deliverance as recorded in Genesis 32:9-11. The third act that Jacob took to deal with the advance of Esau was also offensive in nature, which was to present Esau with gifts, which is recorded in Genesis 32:13-22.

Jacob follows the custom often employed by endangered caravans and divided his company into two divisions, with a view to giving one a chance to escape while Esau's army subdued the other. He realized that they would require God's protection and he was fully intending to go to God in prayer to ask for this protection, which he does as recorded in Genesis 32:9-12.

However, he also realizes it was wise as well as in keeping with God's will for him to take whatever precautions that were open to him as soon as possible, after which he could pray in faith, knowing that he had done all he could and the Lord would have to take charge the rest of the way.

Jacob does not scheme and plan and cry out to God until afterwards. He does not come to God as a last resort but in fact goes to God and communicates his fear to Him, which is not sin but what God wants him to do.

Genesis 32:9-12 is Jacob's first recorded prayer and the only extended prayer in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 32:9-10

"Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you, I am unworthy of all the lovingkindness and of all the

faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies.”

Jacob addresses God, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac” which echoes the Lord’s identification of Himself to Jacob at Bethel, which is recorded in Genesis 28:13.

In Genesis 28:13, the Lord identifies Himself to Jacob as “the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac” in order to reassure Jacob that he will be protected by Him.

In Genesis 32:9, Jacob aims to hold the Lord to His promise of protection by addressing God, “the God of my father Abraham and the God of my father Isaac.”

Jacob’s statement “God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac” is an acknowledgment that God has been faithful to him as He was to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

“God” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes the sovereignty of God, thus indicating Jacob’s desire that God sovereignly intervene in his life and protect him from Esau. The noun *Elohim*, also expresses that God is omnipotent or all-powerful and was able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, thus Jacob is expressing his desire that God use His omnipotence to protect him from harm.

“Lord” is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God thus Jacob is reminding God that he has a covenant relationship with Him. The term “Lord” also emphasizes the “immanency” of God indicating Jacob’s desire that the Lord involve Himself in and concern Himself with and intervene in his life and bless him in fulfillment of His promises to him.

Therefore, we see Jacob approaching God in prayer based upon his covenant relationship with God that was possessed by both his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

The command “Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will prosper you” is a reference to the Lord’s command to Jacob to “return to the

land of your fathers and I will be with you,” which is recorded in Genesis 31:3.

By using this command when addressing God in prayer, Jacob is reminding God that he was obedient to His command and thus in this predicament with Esau because of it and so Jacob is holding God to His promise to bless him, which is an expression of faith on the part of Jacob.

Jacob states in the prayer, “I am unworthy,” which is an acknowledgement on his part that he merits nothing with God and that all He has been promised and has received from God is a gift of His sovereign grace and is casting himself upon God’s mercy and compassion.

His use of this expression expresses Jacob’s humility and that he has finally come to realize that all the prophecies about him and all the blessings were based not upon His merits but upon God’s grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

“Lovingkindness” is the noun *chesedh* (ḥs#j#) (kheh-sed), which means, “loyal or faithful love” to Jacob and which loyal or faithful love Jacob attributes to God who remained faithful to His covenant promises to Jacob by remaining with him and protecting and prospering him while he was in exile with Laban.

Micah 7:20, “You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.”

Therefore, we see that Jacob has an awareness and knowledge of God’s character.

This word *chesedh* involves the inferior partner depending on the kindness of the superior to meet a desperate need. Therefore, we see that Jacob attributes his prospering to God’s loyalty and prays that he can count on the Lord again to follow through for him on this dangerous journey and meet his need as a covenant partner and give him protection from Esau.

“Faithfulness” is the noun *emeth* (tm#a\$) (eh-meth), which is used by Jacob to praise the Lord’s faithfulness, and reliability and trustworthiness in

keeping His promises to prosper and protect him while with Laban.

Psalm 33:4, “For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.”

When taken together, these two noun *chesedh*, “lovingkindness” and *emeth*, “faithfulness” express the continued stability and reliability of God’s unconditional love towards Jacob.

Psalm 25:10, “All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful for those who keep the demands of his covenant.”

Jacob also acknowledges the Lord’s providential care of him while in exile with Laban.

Proverbs 3:6, “In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Jacob calls himself the Lord’s “servant” which is the noun *evedh* (db#u#) (eh-ved) which refers to one who is under authority to another for protection.

The term is a reminder to God that since Jacob is under His authority that Jacob is therefore, under God’s protection as well.

Jacob’s statement, “for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies” is an acknowledgement that God has fulfilled His promises to prosper him while in exile.

By making this statement, Jacob is implying that since God has given Jacob so much material prosperity in life to enjoy, is this prosperity to be brought to nothing by the loss of his life and the lives of his family?

Genesis 32:11

“Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, that he will come and attack me and the mothers with the children.”

Jacob acknowledges his fear of Esau in this prayer to God, and which fear is not sin but rather faith in God since Jacob demonstrates His confidence in God by going to Him in prayer to meet this fear of Esau and asking God to deliver him from Esau and his men.

The acknowledgement of fear in one’s life is not sin but becomes sin when we don’t go to God to meet the fear and trust Him to handle the situation. Jacob’s fear would have become sin if he attempted to deal with this problem with Esau solely by means of his own devices and leave God out of the situation.

The fact that Jacob prayed and did not attempt to deal with this problem with Esau by means of his own power and schemes demonstrates that he is no longer self-confident but rather confident in God. The twenty years with Laban has broken Jacob of relying upon himself to deal with his problems and has taught him to turn to God to solve his problems.

Proverbs 3:5-6, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

Fear is a result of unbelief and unbelief is failure to trust that God will protect and provide for us. So we see quite clearly that Jacob is resting in the promises of the Lord and is therefore, operating in faith rather than unbelief.

Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them and is confident obedience to God’s Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.

The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God’s Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Jacob is not looking at Esau but looking to God and is thus operating in faith and concentrating on the Lord’s promise to protect him.

Principle: Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God, His presence and His Word.

Unbelief operates in the sphere of the old Adamic sin nature and contradicts faith and leaves God out.

The fact that Jacob goes to God in prayer to deal with this situation and doesn't leave God out is an expression of his confidence in God.

Remember, Jacob does not know Esau's intentions and so his fear is justified. The fact that Jacob entered into fear of Esau is not a sin but would have been if he left God out of the situation and did not ask Him to deliver him from Esau.

The fact that Jacob was "not" paralyzed by fear but in fact took these measures and even prays indicates that he is not sinning but rather meeting his fear with practical common sense and appropriating the divine provision of prayer to overcome his fear of Esau.

Fear is not sin but becomes sin when we do not turn to God in prayer to overcome that fear and do not claim the promise of divine protection. Jacob met his fear and anxiety with prayer and claiming the promises that God had made to him in the past of the divine presence, protection and prosperity.

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

1 Peter 5:7, "casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

Psalms 56:3-4, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?"

So to meet his fear of Esau, Jacob asks God to deliver or rescue him from Esau and his men.

Psalms 31:2, "Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me."

Psalms 34:17, "The righteous cry, and the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles."

Psalms 143:9, "Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; I take refuge in You."

Genesis 32:12

"For You said, 'I will surely prosper you and make your descendants as the sand of the sea, which is too great to be numbered.'"

The phrase "for You (Lord) said" is a reference to the personal, national and universal promises that the Lord made to Jacob at Bethel, which are recorded in Genesis 28:13-15 and expresses Jacob's confidence in God and his motivation for his petition and that he bases his entire future on God's promises.

The statement "I will make your descendants as the sand of the sea" is a reference to the promise God made to Jacob to make his descendants like the dust of the earth, which is recorded in Genesis 28:14.

"Your descendants" refers to Isaac's "biological" descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his "spiritual" descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In a "near" sense "Your descendants" refers the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a "far" sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

The comparative clauses "like the dust of the earth" in Genesis 28:14 and "as the sand of the sea" in Genesis 32:12 were fulfilled in a "near" sense in the days of Solomon (see 1 Kings 4:20) and will be fulfilled in a "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ (see Hosea 1:10).

The fact that Jacob reminds God of this promise indicates his concern for his family and posterity and not just himself. The fact that Jacob reminds God of His promise that his descendants would be as the sand of the sea, demonstrates that he is operating in faith in this situation with Esau since he is claiming the promises of God or in other words, he is resting on God's Word.

Psalms 130:5, "I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope."

The fact that Jacob is claiming the promise that his descendants would be as the sand of the sea indicates Jacob's desire to see that God's Word is fulfilled, which would ultimately result in the glorification of God since it would demonstrate God's faithfulness and veracity. Therefore,

Jacob's prayer is not selfish since he desires to see God's Word fulfilled in his life, which leads to the glorification of God.

He does not let go and let God but rather does all that is humanly possible to protect himself and then also goes to God to communicate his fear of Esau and claims the promise of divine protection to meet that fear and then trusts God to work out the details of his deliverance. Therefore, we see that Jacob is demonstrating tremendous spiritual leadership in this situation and faith in God by taking these measures.

Truly, Jacob is a changed man since prior to his exile, he would have never prayed to God to solve a problem but now he prays to solve his problem of anxiety, fear and worry.

If you recall, Jacob left Laban secretly because of fear of Laban, which was an expression of unbelief since he did not pray for deliverance from Laban and did not claim the promise of divine protection. However, here we see Jacob in fear of Esau but handling it differently in that he figures God into the equation by communicating his fear to God and reminding God that He promised to protect and prosper him, which was an expression of his faith.

There are eight essential elements that are contained in Jacob's prayer, which will guide and help us in our prayer life when we are in the midst of adversity.

The first element that we see in Jacob's prayer is that he recognizes and claims his covenant relationship with God as indicated in the statement "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord."

Church age believers when entering into prayer with the Father need to recognize and pray in accordance with their eternal union and relationship with Jesus Christ.

When we pray "in Jesus name" we are acknowledging that we can only approach the Father boldly in prayer based upon the merits of Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross and our eternal union with Him (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

The first prerequisite for an effective prayer is that one must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as one's Savior.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."

The second element in Jacob's prayer is obedience to God's Word where Jacob reminds God that he has been obedient to His command to leave for Canaan as indicated in the statement "O Lord who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your relatives.'"

Obedience to God's Word is another prerequisite for an effective prayer.

Proverbs 28:9, "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination."

John 15:7, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."

Obedience to God's Word constitutes being filled or more accurately influenced by the Holy Spirit since when we obey the Word of God we are obeying the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:18, "And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is stupidity, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be fully influenced by means of the Spirit."

The third element in Jacob's prayer is that he recognizes his own unworthiness in the sense that he acknowledges that he cannot approach God based upon his own merits nor has he been blessed because he merited it and this is indicated by the phrase "I am unworthy."

Jacob states in the prayer, "I am unworthy," which is an acknowledgement on his part that he merits nothing with God and that all He has been promised and has received from God is a gift of

His sovereign grace and is casting himself upon God's mercy and compassion.

His use of this expression expresses his humility and that he has finally come to realize that all the prophecies about him and the all the blessings were based not upon his merits but upon God's grace.

The believer cannot approach the Father in prayer based upon his own merits but on the merits of Christ and the believer has not received every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies based on his own merits but upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross.

1 John 2:12, "I am providing information in writing at this particular time for the benefit of all of you, little children in view of the fact that for the benefit of all of you, your sins have been forgiven-past, present and future on the basis of His merit."

The fourth element to Jacob's prayer is that he acknowledges the character and nature of God and in particular His unconditional, loyal love and faithfulness and this is indicated by the phrase "all the lovingkindness and of all the faithfulness."

When approaching the Father in prayer, the believer must be aware and recognize the character and nature of God in that He is a God of unconditional, loyal love and faithfulness.

1 Corinthians 1:9, "God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

The fifth element is that Jacob recognizes he is under the authority of God, which is indicated by the phrase "Your servant." The believer must recognize that he is under the authority of his heavenly Father and therefore, is under His protection.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

The sixth element is that Jacob acknowledges that he was bankrupt when he arrived in Paddan Aram but now as he enters the land of Canaan he

acknowledges God has prospered him beyond all that he could have ever asked for and this is indicated in the statement "for with my staff only I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two companies."

The believer must acknowledge that prior to salvation he was spiritually bankrupt but now because of his faith in Christ, he has been blessed by the Father with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies because of his eternal union and identification with Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3, "Worthy of praise and glorification is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places because of our union with Christ."

Ephesians 2:4-7, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus."

The seventh element of Jacob's prayer is that he deals with his fear of Esau by first acknowledging his fear to God and then petitions God to deliver him from Esau in order to deal with the fear and this is indicated by his statement in Genesis 32:11.

The believer must deal with his fear in adversity by first acknowledging the fear to God and then petitioning God to deliver him from the adversity in order to deal with the fear.

Jacob's statement in Genesis 32:12 contains the eighth and final element of his prayer, which is that he claims the promise that God would protect and prosper him in order to deal with the fear of Esau.

The believer must claim the promises that God has given to him in His Word, which speak of both spiritual and material prosperity as well as protection.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

“Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, ‘I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.’”

“so that we confidently say, ‘THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?’”

Genesis 32:13-21 presents to us the record of Jacob sending gifts to Esau to restore stealing the blessing of the birthright and thus pacifying him in case Esau has hostile intentions towards him.

Genesis 32:13-15

“So he spent the night there. Then he selected from what he had with him a present for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, thirty milking camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.”

When Genesis 32:13 records that Jacob “spent the night there” it is referring to “Mahanaim,” which according to Genesis 32:2 was the place that he encountered the elect angels.

“Mahanaim” is the proper noun *machanayim* (<y!n^j&m^>) (makh-ah-na-yim), which means, “two camps,” referring to Jacob’s human encampment and the angels encampment and was located on the Jabbok River, along which the major east-west trade route connecting the Trans-jordan King’s Highway and the coastal Via Maris run.

The statement “Then he selected from what he had with him” indicates that Jacob had little time to assemble these animals and simply took whatever was brought to him and did not have the opportunity to inspect them since this was done at night.

A comparison of Genesis 32:13 and 21-22 indicates that after his prayer to the Lord for deliverance and during that same night, Jacob decided it proper to send a very gracious gift to Esau.

Genesis 32:14 records that Jacob sent Esau two hundred female goats and twenty male goats. Goats were domesticated as early as 3000 B.C.

and their milk, butter, cheese and meat provided sustenance. Goat hair and hides were useful in making clothing and containers for liquids.

Genesis 32:14 also records that Jacob sent Esau two hundred ewes or female sheep and twenty rams or mature male sheep.

Genesis 32:15 records that Jacob sent Esau thirty milking or nursing camels and their colts. The camel was a prime beast of burden and a prime measure of wealth in the ancient Near East, owing both to its ability to store water and to survive on desert and steppe scrub. With the camel’s domestication, overland trade routes to the remote spice regions of the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula were opened to the rest of the ancient Near Eastern economic sphere.

Camels were used for milk and hides and their skins were used for sandals. The Israelites were prohibited from eating the meat of camels (Lev. 11:4; Deut. 14:7). However, camel meat is a common part of the diet of Arabic peoples today and was also part of the diet of many biblical peoples.

The possession of many camels implied that the owner was engaged in caravanning. The camel was used for riding and as a beast of burden and for recreational purposes such as racing.

Genesis 32:15 records that Jacob also sent Esau forty cows and ten bulls as well as twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. These animals were valuable for transportation, milk and leather. The females are especially prized for breeding and thus herd expansion and milking, thus Jacob sends more females than he does males.

Donkeys were domesticated early and were comparatively plentiful. Therefore, if we do the math, Jacob sent a total of 550 animals, which is not counting the young camels.

This gift was very generous and gracious and was Jacob’s attempt to reconcile with Esau and offer restitution for his deceiving his blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright upon him rather than Esau.

Jacob sends the gifts in increments in order to offer restitution to Esau in case he is still offended by Jacob’s past conduct in relation to the blessing

of the birthright. The animals were sent as free gifts to compensate the wrong Jacob had done to Esau when he deceived his father Isaac into bestowing upon him the blessing of the birthright rather than to Esau.

Bruce K. Waltke, "He is ready to restore the blessing and to recognize Esau as lord (See Proverbs 25:21-22), trusting God to keep His covenant promises (See Genesis 13; 32:9-12)" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 444, Zondervan).

This gift was "not" a bribe on Jacob's part but rather it was to express that his intentions towards Esau were peaceful and conciliatory and deferential.

Also, this gift was "not" an attempt on Jacob's part to help God out here and therefore an act of unbelief. If you recall, Jacob prayed to God for deliverance from Esau in Genesis 32:9-12. This gift should be "not" construed that Jacob was now forgetting about his prayer to God for deliverance and thinking that he could deliver himself with this gift or help God out with this gift. Rather, Jacob was doing what was required of him under these circumstances since he had cheated and had been deceitful with Esau in the past and was offering restitution for his past conduct with Esau.

With this gift, Jacob was attempting to offer "restitution" to Esau and make amends for actions against Esau when he had deceived his blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright to him rather than Esau.

The Lord Jesus Christ taught His disciples the doctrine of restitution.

Matthew 5:21-25

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'"

"But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the Supreme Court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell."

"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering."

"Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison."

Some propose that the believer when he sins against his fellow believer need only to confess his offense to God who then freely forgives, without any need to seek forgiveness or to resolve the offended horizontal relationship. Some make the claim that the death of Christ brings experiential forgiveness before God and before men without any further resolution or restitution between men.

These proponents argue that for every sin and crime, one need only to confess to God for total forgiveness experientially. The victim is then required to forgive based solely upon the positional forgiveness that "he" has personally received in Christ. This view is proposed from faulty interpretations of the following two passages:

Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Colossians 3:13, "bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."

If we carry this view to its logical end, the victim must forgive and seek restoration with the perpetrator solely because of the forgiveness of Christ. Thus, the thief steals, confesses to God, who supposedly totally forgives him, but tough luck for the victim who has lost real property!

The slanderer libels, devastates his target, and confesses to God, who supposedly totally forgives him but tough luck again for the victim with a ruined reputation!

In the case of sin against one's fellow human being, those who hold that confession to God

alone is all that is necessary for forgiveness in the experiential sense remove the basis for criminal law. They also remove the basis of restitution to victims and some holding this view include in their logic a faulty interpretation of David's prayer of confession in Psalm 51.

Psalm 51:4a, "Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight."

Thus, with their logic, the thief steals, confesses to God, who supposedly totally forgives him, but tough luck for the victim who has lost real property or the slanderer libels, devastates his target, and confesses to God, who supposedly totally forgives him but tough luck again for the victim with a ruined reputation!

In this way they avoid the command of James 5:16 to confess your sins to one another but to the contrary, we should interpret this passage where the confession of the offender's sin to the offended party takes place.

Our Lord taught His disciples that if their horizontal relationships with people are not right because of sin, then they are not right in their vertical relationship with God. For instance, if we don't forgive our fellow believers, then God won't forgive us in the experiential sense and thus we won't be restored to fellowship (Mt. 6:14-15; Mt. 18:21-35).

Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

So, if we have sinned and injured someone whether his or her property or reputation, we must confess it to the injured party and offer restitution, which in some cases, restitution could simply involve an apology.

Sins against society and against one another require civil restitution for experiential forgiveness before God and men, thus, the thief steals, realizes his sin, and confesses to God and his victim, then makes restitution, and God forgives him.

The divine requirement commands men to forgive the repentant offender. The death of Christ compensated God and the perpetrator compensates

the victim by restitution. The slanderer libels and devastates his target, realizes his sin, confesses to God and the victim, makes restitution, and God forgives him. The Lord requires men to forgive the repentant man and the death of Christ compensates God whereas restitution compensates the victim.

Leviticus 6 presents clear guidelines about the principles involved when one sins against God and another person.

Leviticus 6:1-7

"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the LORD, and deceives his companion in regard to a deposit or a security entrusted to him, or through robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion, or has found what was lost and lied about it and sworn falsely, so that he sins in regard to any one of the things a man may do.'

"then it shall be, when he sins and becomes guilty, that he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost thing which he found, or anything about, which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering."

"Then he shall bring to the priest his guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without defect from the flock, according to your valuation, for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he will be forgiven for any one of the things which he may have done to incur guilt."

In the Gospel of Luke, Zaccheus informed the Lord that he gave to those whom he had defrauded four times as much.

Luke 19:8-10, "Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he,

too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Therefore, we see that in Genesis 32:13-21, Jacob is offering restitution to Esau in order to make amends for defrauding Esau when he stole the blessing of the birthright.

Genesis 32:16

“He delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, ‘Pass on before me, and put a space between droves.’”

Genesis 32:16 records that Jacob divided the animals into five different droves: first the goats (200 female and 20 male), then the sheep (20 male and 200 female), then camels (30) and their young, then the cattle (40 cows and 10 bulls) and then the donkeys (20 female and 10 male).

Jacob told his servants to keep a good distance between each drove of animals so that as a result Esau would receive five separate gifts at different times. Jacob instructed his servants in command of each drove to inform Esau that each drove of animals was a gift from Jacob who would be following behind them.

Notice also that Jacob gives instructions that each shepherd was to “follow” his herd, rather than lead it in order to impress Esau with the herd and then the message that the herd was a gift for him.

Genesis 32:17

“He commanded the one in front, saying, ‘When my brother Esau meets you and asks you, saying, ‘To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these animals in front of you belong?’”

Genesis 32:18

“then you shall say, ‘These belong to your servant Jacob; it is a present sent to my lord Esau. And behold, he also is behind us.’”

Genesis 32:19-20

“Then he commanded also the second and the third, and all those who followed the droves, saying, ‘After this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him and you shall say,

‘Behold, your servant Jacob also is behind us.’ For he said, ‘I will appease him with the present that goes before me. Then afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me.’”

“Appease” is the piel form of the verb *kaphar* (רפ^K*), which in the context of Esau and Jacob’s relationship at this point refers to “reconciling” or “repairing” their relationship. The implication of this word is that with this gift Esau would be visually blocked from seeing Jacob’s transgression of twenty years earlier or in other words, the gift was designed to “cover” the sin that Jacob had committed against Esau some twenty years earlier.

Genesis 32:21

“So the present passed on before him, while he himself spent that night in the camp.”

In Genesis 32:22-23, we see that by faith Jacob sends his family across the Jabbok River and into the land of Canaan.

Genesis 32:22

“Now he arose that same night and took his two wives and his two maids and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok.”

Genesis 32:23

“He took them and sent them across the stream. And he sent across whatever he had.”

In the Hebrew style, the narrator first gives a summary statement that presents the final result, which is recorded in Genesis 32:22 stating that Jacob crossed the Jabbok, which is then followed by the details, which continue up to Genesis 32:32 where the final crossing takes place.

Now, Genesis 32:22 records that Jacob sent his household across the Jabbok at night, which is significant. The darkness symbolizes the turmoil that Jacob was experiencing in his soul as he was trying to reconcile Esau’s advance with four hundred men and God’s promises to be with him and protect him and to return him to the land of Canaan.

Jacob’s “two wives” were Rachel and Leah and the “two maids” were his secondary wives or concubines, Zilpah (Leah’s maid) and Bilhah (Rachel’s maid).

“His eleven children” were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (See Genesis 29:31-35), Issachar, Zebulun (See Genesis 30:14-21), Gad, Asher (See Genesis 30:9-13), Dan, Naphtali (See Genesis 30:1-8), and Joseph (See Genesis 30:22-24).

“Dinah” is not mentioned “not” because she is the only girl in the family but rather because she plays no role in the founding of the nation of Israel, which is the concern of the narrator Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

This is a critical time in the founding of the nation of Israel because the nation will never become a reality if they do not survive this encounter with Esau.

Furthermore, if the nation does not become a reality, then the Savior will not be able to come into the world since the Savior was to descend in His human nature from Jacob and his family.

“Ford” is the noun *ma`avar* (rb*u&m^), which refers to a shallow smooth flowing section of the Jabbok river, which would allow Jacob’s household to walk across to the other side.

Before the construction of bridges, flat stepping stones or timber would be laid across the shallowest and narrowest part of the river to enable one to cross it.

“Jabbok” is the proper noun *yabboq* (QB{y^}) (yab-boke), which is a sixty-mile-long tributary east of the Jordan River and is one of the major streams of the Trans-jordan, originating in the mountains near Ammon, flowing north and then northwest and emptying into the Jordan River about 20 miles north of the Dead Sea.

Bruce K. Waltke, “The river flows through deeply cut canyons for about 50 miles westward from its source, moving from 1900 feet above sea level to 115 feet below sea level” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 445, Zondervan).

Today, the “Jabbok” is called the “Wadi Zerqa,” which means, “the blue river.” The “Jabbok” formed a natural boundary and constituted the limit of the territory the nation of Israel dispossessed under Moses (Numbers 21:24; Deuteronomy 2:37; 3:16; Joshua 12:2; Judges 11:13, 22).

So after sending the animals and the servants across the river, which constituted the gift for Esau as restitution for his deceitful conduct in the past towards Esau, Jacob then sends his family across last. The fact that Jacob initiates contact with Esau and even risks sending his beloved wives and children ahead of him to meet Esau indicates quite clearly that Jacob is operating in faith and trusting the Lord to protect him and his family.

If Jacob was afraid of Esau he would never have risked initiating contact with Esau or risk sending his beloved family ahead of him in the path of Esau. To cross at night with a vast entourage as Jacob did, was a difficult and dangerous operation, which could only be undertaken by moonlight and only under urgent circumstances, which this was.

By moving from the northern to the southern side of the Jabbok River, Jacob is placing himself and his family all the more quickly in the path of Esau, who was advancing from Seir in the south.

If he lived in fear of Esau, he would never undertaken such an operation and risk his family’s safety or his own. If you recall, Jacob told Laban that he left Paddan Aram in secret out of fear of Laban. If Jacob was afraid of Esau, he would have slipped into the country secretly just as he left Laban in secret out of fear of Laban. Therefore, it is clear that Jacob is operating in faith, resting in the promise of God to protect him and his family and if he wasn’t operating in faith, he would never have risked initiating contact publicly with Esau or risk sending his beloved wives and children ahead of him.

Faith produces courage whereas unbelief produces cowardice and so we see that Jacob’s faith has produced courage in his soul. Faith honors the Lord whereas unbelief dishonors the Lord because it calls into question His integrity and ability to deliver on His promises.

Faith is obedience to God’s commands and is the positive response to God’s commands and acting upon those directions. Jacob is demonstrating his faith by his obedience to the Lord’s command to return to the land of Canaan.

Unbelief on the other hand is disobedient and is the negative response to God’s commands and as a result the failure to act upon God’s commands.

Unbelief not only occupies itself with difficulties but also magnifies and exaggerates them so that spiritual defeat (Rm. 7) rules out experiencing victory (Rm. 8).

Fear is a result of unbelief and unbelief is failure to trust that God will protect and provide for us.

So we see quite clearly that Jacob is resting in the promise that the Lord would protect him and is therefore, operating in faith rather than unbelief and is not occupied with the difficulties of confronting Esau or magnifying them or exaggerating them.

Jacob obeyed the Lord's command to return to Canaan even though there was uncertainty as to Esau's attitude towards him.

Hearing the Word of Christ produces faith in God (Rm. 10:17) and so we see that God's Word motivated Jacob to walk by faith.

Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

The Christian soldier's faith or total and absolute confidence in God's faithfulness to His promises acts as a shield protecting his soul from the attacks of Satan and his kingdom of darkness, which come in the form of thought projections that are designed to produce doubt in God's Word.

Ephesians 6:16, "In addition to everything, I solemnly charge all of you to take up for yourselves your shield, which is your faith because that will enable all of you to extinguish all the flaming arrows originating from the evil one."

Jacob's soul was protected from the attacks by the kingdom of darkness because of his faith in God and His promises.

The believer employs the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, by exercising faith in the Word of God, which is expressed by obedience and results in victory in spiritual combat.

Ephesians 6:17, "Also, I solemnly charge all of you to take hold of your helmet, which is your salvation as well as your sword that originates from the Spirit, which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God's Word."

1 John 5:4, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith."

Jacob will experience victory not only in spiritual combat with Satan and the kingdom of darkness but also victory with Esau in that they will be reconciled.

Faith in the Word of God appropriates the omnipotence of God.

Matthew 17:20, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Jacob is not looking at Esau but looking to God and is thus operating in faith and concentrating on the Lord's promise to protect him and is therefore appropriating the omnipotence of God to deal with this mountain in his life in the form of Esau.

God will reward our faith since it pleases Him and so God will reward Jacob for his faith in Him.

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

Principle: Unbelief is the failure to take into account and acknowledge the character and nature of God, His presence and His Word.

Unbelief operates in the sphere of the old Adamic sin nature and contradicts faith and leaves God out.

By initiating contact with Esau and sending his family across the Jabbok, Jacob is taking into account God and acknowledging His character and nature, His presence and His Word in the form of His promise of protection.

Fear is not sin but becomes sin when we do not turn to God in prayer to overcome that fear and do not claim the promise of divine protection. Jacob met his fear and anxiety with prayer and claiming the promises that God had made to him in the past of the divine presence, protection and prosperity.

In Genesis 32:24a, we see Jacob alone in prayer prior to his encounter with Esau and entrance into the land of Canaan, which was in obedience to the Lord's command.

Genesis 32:24

“Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.”

So after Jacob had done everything he could in the way of offering restitution to Esau for his deceitfulness towards Esau twenty years before, and after sending his wives and children across, we see Jacob alone.

Several questions come to mind when we view this passage. First of all, why did Jacob rise in the night and send his family across at night, why not wait till daylight? Secondly, why after taking his family across the Jabbok, did he return to the other side of the river to be alone?

The answer to both of these questions is that Jacob wanted to be alone with God in prayer before his meeting with Esau the next morning. He knew that Esau would not arrive until the next morning and so his family would be safe for the night with the other servants.

Though the text does not say specifically, the implication is that Jacob sent everyone across the Jabbok and stayed behind in order to be completely alone with God in prayer. So we see that Jacob prayed not only before sending the gift to Esau but also he will pray once again after sending the gift and his family across the Jabbok before meeting Esau.

Jacob's desire to be alone with God in prayer presents to us a great example to follow in approaching our relationship with God and when facing great adversity.

In our hurry up, man-centered, man-dependent world that measures success by activity, making big bucks, or how much we accomplish, finding time to hide ourselves alone with God for steady spiritual growth is a lost priority. It is viewed by many as a nonessential, as something for those who have nothing to do.

The question people often ask is where is the practicality of time alone with God? We find it extremely hard to look at time in terms other than 'To Do' lists and projects, performance and accomplishments.

Others view time alone with God as a virtual impossibility. There are centrifugal forces at work

in our modern world that propel us into a whirlwind of activity or business. But perhaps more than anything else our society has been led into a dangerous mood of impatience.

Eugene Peterson accurately captures this mood of our day and writes, "One aspect of the world that I have been able to identify as harmful to Christians is the assumption that anything worthwhile can be acquired at once. We assume that if something can be done at all, it can be done quickly and efficiently. Our attention spans have been conditioned by thirty-second commercials. Our sense of reality has been flattened by thirty-page abridgments. There is a great market for religious experience in our world; there is little enthusiasm for the patient acquisition of virtue, little inclination to sign up for a long apprenticeship in what earlier generations of Christians called holiness. Everyone is in a hurry. The persons whom I lead in worship, among whom I counsel, visit, pray, preach, and teach, want short cuts ... They are impatient for results ... The Christian life cannot mature under such conditions and in such ways" (A Long Obedience in the Same Direction, InterVarsity, Downers Grove, IL, 1980, pages 11-12).

King David knew his need of daily time alone with God and, though faced with trials and pressures that were pulling him in other directions, he vowed that nothing would keep him from meeting with God daily, especially at the beginning his day.

Psalms 5:3, "In the morning, O LORD, You will hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to You and eagerly watch."

No doubt it was this intimate morning-by-morning meeting with the Lord that developed David's faith and made him a man after God's own heart. This morning watch, as we might call it, has the special reward of knowing God more intimately and of Christ-like transformation.

The Lord Jesus Christ prayed in the morning (Mark 1:35-38; Luke 4:42).

Mark 1:35, "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there."

The rewards of time alone with God are often not immediately evident and in our impatience we run to something more visibly practical but there is a self-deception at work here as well.

The negative effects of ignoring daily time to be alone with God is also not immediately visible. It's not like falling off a roof where gravity immediately takes over and swiftly plunges us to the ground.

Ecclesiastes 8:11, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil."

Ecclesiastes 8:12, "Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly."

The aftermath of failing to draw near to God is more like the decomposition of organic material, slow but sure. In time we can begin to see and even smell the signs of spiritual and moral decay.

Ironically, spiritual decay is often accompanied by a paradox, the rock-like hardening of our souls which may blind us to the rot taking place in our heart.

Hebrews 3:7-8, "Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, 'TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME, AS IN THE DAY OF TRIAL IN THE WILDERNESS.'"

Hebrews 3:12-13, "Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called 'Today,' so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Unless, we make time alone with God a priority, the other hours devoted to our busy schedules will be poorly used. We are prone to ignore times of retreat because our work, ministry, families, all seem more important.

Doing seems so much more practical than praying or meditating on the Word. But the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation on the Word do not constitute idleness or indolence. They are

rigorous disciplines that are vital to the spiritual life.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, "Make it your habit to pray on a consistent basis."

Psalm 119:15, "I will meditate on Your precepts and regard Your ways."

We can too easily be like Martha, who was distracted by so many things, rather than Mary who sat at the feet of the Savior to hear His Word.

Luke 10:38-32

"Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word."

"But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.'"

"But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'"

Then, we see in Genesis 32:24b Jacob wrestling with the preincarnate Christ.

Genesis 32:24-32

"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak."

"When he (the Lord) saw that he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob), he (the Lord) touched the socket of his (Jacob's) thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him."

"Then he (the Lord) said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But he (Jacob) said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'"

"So he (the Lord) said to him (Jacob), 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.'"

“He said, ‘Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.’”

“Then Jacob asked him and said, ‘Please tell me your name.’ But he said, ‘Why is it that you ask my name?’ And he blessed him there.”

“So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, ‘I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.’”

“Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh.”

“Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.”

So after Jacob had done everything he could in the way of offering restitution to Esau for his deceitfulness towards Esau twenty years before, and after sending his wives and children across, we see Jacob alone. Jacob wanted to be alone with God in prayer before his meeting with Esau the next morning.

The reason why Jacob wanted to be alone with God in prayer was that undoubtedly he was “wrestling” with his fears concerning encountering Esau the next day. Jacob was wrestling with his fears in prayer even though by faith he prayed for deliverance from Esau and even initiated contact with Esau and sent his beloved family across the Jabbok directly in the path of Esau. While in prayer, Jacob was fighting the good fight of faith.

1 Timothy 6:12, “Fight the good fight of faith.”

Jacob must have crossed the Jabbok again because Genesis 32:24 tells us that he was alone. He was alone as far as other human beings are concerned but he is in reality alone with God.

Genesis 32:24

“Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.”

“And” is the conjunction *w^e* (*waw*), which is employed with the imperfect tense of the verb *ʾavaq* (*qb^a*), “wrestled” in order to signify the next “sequential” event that took place after Jacob was left alone in prayer with God and should therefore be translated “then.”

“Man” is the noun *ʾish* (*vyā!*) (eesh), which refers to the Son of God prior to becoming a human being permanently in Bethlehem two thousand years ago and is therefore a “theophany” or “Christophany.”

The words “theophany” or “Christophany” are technical theological terms used to refer to a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). Therefore, in the Old Testament a “theophany” or “Christophany” were appearances of the “preincarnate” Christ.

The word “incarnate” is from the Latin, *in* and *caro*, whose stem *carn* means, “flesh.” Therefore, the term “preincarnate” means before the Son of God became a human being permanently in Bethlehem.

There are three stages in the career of the Lord Jesus Christ: (1) “Preincarnate”: Eternity past as the 2nd Person of the Trinity, the Son of God. (2) “Incarnate”: Virgin birth through the 1st Advent to the resurrection. (3) “Glorified Incarnate”: Resurrection and on into eternity future.

The context indicates quite clearly Jacob wrestled with the Lord since Genesis 32:28 says that the man wrestling with Jacob says to Jacob that he has “striven with God.”

Furthermore, in Genesis 32:29, Jacob named the place where the wrestling match took place “Peniel,” which means, “I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.”

These “preincarnate” appearances of the Son of God are often designated in the Old Testament by the expression, “the angel of the Lord” or simply “angel.”

“Angel” is the noun *mal'akh* (*Ea^{*}l+m[^]*) (*mal-awk*), which means, “messenger” is used in the Old Testament with reference to “elect” angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the “preincarnate” Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1).

One must refer to the context in order to determine if the word “angel” or “angel of the Lord” is a reference to a human or angelic messenger or a divine messenger, i.e. the Son of God.

Hosea 12:3-5 refers to Jacob's wrestling match with the Lord and uses the term "angel" and identifies that angel as God.

Hosea 12:3-5

"In the womb he (Jacob) took his brother (Esau) by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God."

"Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; He wept and sought His favor. He found Him at Bethel and there He spoke with us, even the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name."

Hosea 12:4 says that Jacob "wrestled with the angel" whereas Hosea 12:3 says that Jacob "contended with God," and Hosea 12:5 calls the angel "the Lord is His name," thus identifying the angel as God. Therefore, the context of Hosea 12:3-5 and Genesis 32:24-32 indicates quite clearly that the "man" that Jacob wrestled with was a preincarnate appearance of the Son of God.

Now, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit does not immediately identify to the reader that it was the Lord that Jacob was wrestling with in order to heighten the story's tension and to draw the reader in. Jacob is alone, unprotected, and in the dark and now he is attacked by some man, which would cause the reader to take notice. Therefore, we see Jacob left alone in prayer with God and then an unidentified man initiates a wrestling match with him at night.

"Wrestled" is the niphal form of the verb *`avaq* (q̄b^a*) (aw-vak) and is a play on the name "Jabbok," which means, "Wrestler" and Jacob's name, which means, "heel catcher."

So to paraphrase this word play, we could say that the Lord "Yabboked" Jacob or "He Jacobed" him.

This wrestling match with the Lord was an "historical event" and was "not" a dream or an allegory since you don't wake up from a dream with a dislocated hip as Jacob did.

Also, this wrestling match was "spiritual" as well since Hosea 12:4 states that Jacob "wept and sought His (the Lord's) favor" in prayer.

Jacob's wrestling match with the preincarnate Christ is symbolic of his struggles with both God and men.

Genesis 32:24

"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak."

Genesis 32:25

"When he (the Lord) saw that he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob), he (the Lord) touched the socket of his (Jacob's) thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him."

Genesis 32:26

"Then he (the Lord) said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.' But he (Jacob) said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.'"

Notice, that the Lord initiates the wrestling match and not Jacob since it states that the Lord "wrestled with Jacob" and not "Jacob wrestled with the Man." Jacob did "not" want to wrestle anybody.

Remember, he had just left his uncle Laban who abused him for twenty years and now he is about to face his old rival, Esau who had sought to kill him in the past. Therefore, the last thing that Jacob wanted to do was pick a fight with someone.

This wrestling match between God and Jacob is a "microcosm" or "symbolic" of Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The wrestling match with Jacob did "not" teach any spiritual lessons to Jacob but rather the divine discipline that he underwent in the form of the fourteen years of hard labor for his deceitful uncle Laban taught Jacob many spiritual lessons, which are symbolized in the wrestling match with the Lord.

Jacob's problems with his father Isaac (favored Esau over Jacob), his brother Esau, and his uncle Laban, and his wives were in reality problems with God since God permitted these people to come into his life to draw him closer to God. Since the wrestling match depicts Jacob's struggles with God and men, the Lord initiating the wrestling match with Jacob symbolizes that the Lord is the one who gave him his father Isaac and his brother

Esau and brought his uncle Laban into his life who were the source of great adversity in Jacob's life.

God not only prospered Jacob but also permitted adversity to take place in his life in the form of people such as his father Isaac, his twin brother Esau and his uncle Laban.

Ecclesiastes 7:14, "In the day of prosperity be happy, but in the day of adversity consider -- God has made the one as well as the other so that man will not discover anything that will be after him."

The Son of God appeared as a man at night to illustrate this to Jacob and to the reader that Jacob's problems with people were in fact problems with God.

In the same way that Jacob thought he was wrestling just a mere man when in reality he was wrestling with God so Jacob erroneously thought that his struggles in life were with his father Isaac, his twin brother Esau and his uncle Laban when in reality they were with God.

Jacob's entire life could be characterized as a wrestling match with both God and men. The first manifestation of this wrestling match was in the womb of his mother Rebekah where both he and his twin brother were crushing each other (See Genesis 25:22). The actions of Jacob at birth grabbing the heel of his brother Esau was the second manifestation of this wrestling match (See Genesis 25:26).

Another manifestation of Jacob's struggles with men was when he exploited Esau's hunger by getting him to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup (See Genesis 25:28-34). Then, there was Jacob at the instigation of his mother Rebekah deceiving his father Isaac who was blind at the time in bestowing the blessings of the birthright to himself rather than his brother Esau (See Genesis 27).

This was followed by Jacob's problems with Laban who was brought into Jacob's life to discipline him so as to break his sinful patterns of deceitfulness and treachery (See Genesis 29:21-28). This discipline came in the form of Laban deceiving Jacob by sending Leah and not Rachel into his tent on his wedding night when he had just worked seven years for Rachel. This discipline

succeeded as manifested in Jacob's thoughtfulness and consideration of Esau's feelings and his desire to offer Esau restitution for cheating him out of the blessing of the birthright (See Genesis 32:13-20).

Jacob's wrestling match with God and man also manifested itself in the love life of Jacob where he chose Rachel to be his wife because of her physical beauty rather than based upon her character (See Genesis 29:10-20). This physical attraction blinded Jacob as to the true identity of his right woman, which was Leah who was not as beautiful as Rachel. As a result of this poor decision Jacob had to deal with Leah and Rachel competing with each other in order to gain his affection and love (See Genesis 29:31-30:24).

So we can see that the wrestling match is indicative of Jacob's life up to the birth of Joseph. I say that this wrestling match with God and people was indicative of Jacob's life up to the birth of Joseph because when Joseph was born, at the end of the fourteen years of service for Laban, we see Jacob demonstrates a tremendous act of faith in dealing with a problem with Laban.

If you recall in Genesis 30, Laban had cheated Jacob out of his wages for fourteen years and after the fourteen years was completed Jacob wanted to leave Laban. Laban didn't want Jacob to leave because he was prospered by God for being associated with Jacob. Therefore, Laban asked Jacob to name his wages.

Jacob asks for nothing from Laban but instead proposed to Laban that all the spotted, speckled and striped of Laban's flock be removed so that only solid colored animals remain, which he would care for. Jacob proposes that his pay would consist of only those animals yet unborn that would be less desirable to Laban because of their markings. Therefore, it would be entirely up to the Lord as to how many animals would become Jacob's.

Jacob's proposal put himself entirely at the mercy of the Lord and was a great act of faith in the Lord on his part. This great act of faith was the first ray of sunlight in his life and was the beginning of the end of his divine discipline.

Also, Jacob's wrestling match with the Lord at night symbolizes the divine discipline that Jacob

underwent in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for his deceitful uncle Laban.

The fact that the wrestling match took place at night is a picture or symbolic of the divine discipline he underwent in the form of his fourteen years of hard labor for his deceitful uncle Laban. This discipline was a demonstration of the Lord's love for Jacob.

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer.

Revelation 3:14-19

"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this."

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I wish that you were cold or hot."

"So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth."

"Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked."

"I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire so that you may become rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness will not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see."

"Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent."

"Love" is the verb *phileo* (filevw), which means, "to personally and affectionately love someone" and expresses the Lord Jesus Christ's personal affection, care and concern for the believer by disciplining him whether for training when obedient or punishment when disobedient.

"Reprove" is the verb *elencho* (e)levgxw, "to reprove, chasten" and "convict" of sin in order to "instruct" the believer and restore him to fellowship.

"Discipline" is the verb *paideuo* (paideuvw) and was commonly used in Greek literature to mean

the "upbringing" and "teaching" and "disciplining" of children.

Such "upbringing" consisted of teaching general knowledge and various kinds of training aimed at developing discipline and character.

The Lord reproves us because He is trying to develop His character in us.

Revelation 3:20-22

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

"He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne."

"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Revelation 3:20-22 teaches that the Lord disciplines us not only because He loves us and but also because He wants to reward us.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father's will.

The divine discipline was successful in getting Jacob to recognize that his number one priority in life was conformity to the will of God.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

Galatians 6:7, 8

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

"For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life."

God permitted Jacob to reap the fruits of his bad decisions with Esau and his father Isaac so that he might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life.

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

Hebrews 4:12, “The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart.”

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Jeremiah 32:33, “They have turned their back to Me and not their face; though I taught them, teaching again and again, they would not listen and receive instruction.”

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the pastor-teacher who is the delegated authority in the local assembly, to reprove and rebuke the children of God from the pulpit with the Word of God as an expression of His love.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom.”

“preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires.”

“and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not train us when we are obedient and punishes us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God.

Hebrews 12:1-11

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

“You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.”

“and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons, ‘MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM.’”

“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”

“But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?”

“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.”

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase “share His holiness” and to produce “the fruit of righteousness” according to Hebrews 12:11.

Righteousness deals with proper conduct towards both God and man whereas holiness deals with the character that is result of proper conduct towards God and man.

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and underserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father. Jacob received discipline without getting bitter and complaining and instead recognized and submitted to God’s authority.

Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproofs, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Job 5:17-18, “Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproofs, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Proverbs 15:32-33, “He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.”

The divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for Laban had humbled him and forced him to avail himself of the divine provision of prayer and claiming the promises that the Lord had made to him at Bethel.

The fact that Jacob’s wrestling match with the preincarnate Christ ended at “daybreak” symbolizes or is a picture of Jacob no longer under divine discipline but rather “walking in the light,” which describes experiencing fellowship with God by being obedient to the Word of God, which demonstrates our faith in God.

1 John 1:5-7

“This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.”

“but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

The divine discipline in the form of twenty years of hard labor for Laban had humbled him and forced him to avail himself of the divine provision of prayer and claiming the promises that the Lord had made to him at Bethel. When Jacob wrestles the Lord, at that point in his life, he was walking in the light, in fellowship with God.

The question arises, at what point in the life of Jacob did he come out from under divine discipline and begin to walk in fellowship with God by operating in faith? The turning point in Jacob’s life came when he stopped fighting God and men and began to walk by faith was after the fourteen years of service to Laban.

Jacob’s wrestling match with the Lord and men continued up to the birth of Joseph at the completion of Jacob’s fourteen years of service to Laban, which is indicated by Jacob’s proposal to Laban recorded in Genesis 30 since this proposal demonstrated tremendous faith in the Lord and His promises.

If you recall, the first seven years that Jacob worked for Laban was to marry Leah and the next seven years was payment to marry Rachel. During these last seven years, God had prospered Jacob by giving him eleven boys and one girl (See Genesis 29:31-30:24) and through the birth of these children, Jacob could see God working in his

life and fulfilling His promises to him of numerous progeny, which caused a change in Jacob in that he grew to trust and love God.

Also during these fourteen years, Jacob saw God prospering Laban through him and this too caused a change in Jacob in that he grew to love and trust God even more as a result of seeing the Lord fulfill His promises to be with him and protect him and bless him (See Genesis 30:27).

Furthermore, right after the Lord gave Jacob's favorite wife Rachel a child named Joseph, we see Jacob's faith in the Lord manifested in a fantastic way in his proposal to Laban regarding flocks, which is recorded in Genesis 30:22-43.

Genesis 30:22-34

"Then God remembered Rachel, and God gave heed to her and opened her womb."

"So she conceived and bore a son and said, 'God has taken away my reproach.'"

"She named him Joseph, saying, 'May the LORD give me another son.'"

"Now it came about when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, 'Send me away that I may go to my own place and to my own country.'"

"Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me depart; for you yourself know my service which I have rendered you."

"But Laban said to him, 'If now it pleases you, stay with me; I have divined that the LORD has blessed me on your account.'"

"He continued, 'Name me your wages, and I will give it.'"

"But he said to him, 'You yourself know how I have served you and how your cattle have fared with me.'"

"For you had little before I came and it has increased to a multitude, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I turned. But now, when shall I provide for my own household also?"

"So he said, 'What shall I give you?' And Jacob said, 'You shall not give me anything. If you will

do this one thing for me, I will again pasture and keep your flock.'"

"let me pass through your entire flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted sheep and every black one among the lambs and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such shall be my wages."

"So my honesty will answer for me later, when you come concerning my wages. Every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats and black among the lambs, if found with me, will be considered stolen."

"Laban said, 'Good, let it be according to your word.'"

Jacob asks for nothing from Laban but instead proposed to Laban that all the spotted, speckled and striped of Laban's flock be removed so that only solid colored animals remain, which he would care for.

Jacob proposes that his pay would consist of only those animals yet unborn and so therefore, it would be entirely up to the Lord as to how many animals would become Jacob's.

Jacob's proposal put himself entirely at the mercy of the Lord and was a great act of faith in the Lord on his part and was the first ray of sunlight in his life and was the beginning of the end of his divine discipline.

It is at this point in his life that Jacob begins to walk by faith and not by sight and his faith is manifested in several incidents after this proposal with Laban, which are recorded in Genesis 31-32.

In Genesis 31:3, Jacob obeyed the Lord to leave Laban and return to Canaan even though he knew Laban would react in a hostile fashion towards him and that Esau had in the past wanted to kill him.

In Genesis 32:3-6, Jacob initiates contact with Esau by sending messengers to Esau to convey to him his desire to reconcile with him.

In Genesis 32:9-12, Jacob deals with his fear of Esau and his four hundred men by praying to God for deliverance and claiming the promises of protection from God.

In Genesis 32:13-21, Jacob sends 550 animals to Esau as restitution for stealing the blessing of the birthright from him twenty years before.

In Genesis 32:22-23, Jacob sent his family across the Jabbok directly in the path of Esau, manifesting his faith that God would protect them.

In Genesis 32:24a, Jacob desired to be alone with God in prayer before he encountered Esau.

Therefore, we can see that Jacob left Canaan a man who could be characterized as a cheat and a scoundrel and a slave to his old Adamic sin nature that did not trust God to deal with his problems with people. However, upon reentering Canaan, he had developed into a great man of God who walked by faith and not by sight, who prayed to God for help in adversity rather than resorting to his own schemes to solve his problems.

So therefore, the character of Jacob has changed dramatically since he left Canaan and this is why the Lord changed his name to Israel and which change of name represented a change of character.

Genesis 32:25

“When he (the Lord) saw that he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob), he (the Lord) touched the socket of his (Jacob’s) thigh; so the socket of Jacob’s thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.”

Genesis 32:25a records the Lord as not prevailing over Jacob in their wrestling match. The Lord did not prevail over Jacob in the sense that the Lord could not refuse Jacob’s prayer requests because they were according to His will and because Jacob persevered in prayer.

The fact that the Scriptures state that the Lord did not prevail against Jacob does “not” impugn God’s omnipotence but rather as we will note does effectively portray the power of persevering in prayer with God.

God does allow the prayer of men to be mighty in His sight when they persevere in prayer and offer that prayer in faith. The fact that Jacob is physically broken and yet will not give up is symbolic of Jacob being broken through the divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for Laban and yet not quitting on God but in

fact he persevered in his relationship with God in prayer by claiming the promises God made to him!

Therefore, the statement “he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob)” means that Jacob would not give up in the wrestling match with Lord, which was symbolic of Jacob’s prayer life in that he did not give up but rather persevered in prayer.

Jacob had learned the power and importance of persevering in prayer, which is called by theologians, “prevailing prayer.” Perseverance is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances.

Matthew 7:7, “Ask repeatedly, and it will be given to you; seek repeatedly, and you will find; knock repeatedly, and it will be opened to you.”

Luke 18:1-8

“Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, saying, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man.’”

“There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’”

“For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’”

“And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge said; now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?’”

“I tell you that He will bring about justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?”

The prayer of Jacob that appears in Genesis 32:24-32 was unlike the prayers that we in the church age are to make. Jacob spoke directly face to face with the visible manifestation of the Son of God whereas in the church age we are commanded by

the Son of God to pray directly to the Father who is invisible (Jn. 16:26-27; Eph. 3:14).

The fact that Jacob wept in prayer according to Hosea 12:4 makes him a type of Christ who according to Hebrews 5:7, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His reverence (for the Father)."

The statement "he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob)" implies that God opposed Jacob but not just in the wrestling match but in a spiritual sense, namely, in prayer.

God opposed Jacob in the sense that when Jacob first got saved and was first learning to pray as a spiritual child of God, he like most spiritual children, asked for things from God that were against His will or he asked for things for selfish reasons.

James 4:3, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

So early on in his relationship with God, God opposed Jacob because his prayers were not according to the will of God.

1 John 5:14, 15

"This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

"And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

Now that Jacob has matured spiritually, God did not oppose his prayers because they were according to the will of God. Therefore, the statement "he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob)" means that God could no longer oppose Jacob's prayers because they he had matured to the point spiritually that his prayers were according to the will of God.

In fact Genesis 32:9-12 records Jacob's prayer for deliverance from Esau and in this prayer he claimed the promises that God made to him, which are recorded in Genesis 28:10-15 and 31:3, thus

Jacob was praying according to the will of God since the promises originated from God.

Now, we must remember that when the Lord initiated the wrestling match, Jacob was alone in prayer presenting to the Lord his fears concerning confronting Esau the very next day.

So Jacob was actually already "wrestling" in prayer with the Lord in the sense that Jacob was trying to reconcile the advance of Esau with four hundred men and God's promises to be with him and protect him and to return him to the land of Canaan.

While in prayer, he was fighting the good fight of faith in the sense that in his soul, he was fighting the temptation to give in to his fears and not trust God to protect him from Esau.

1 Timothy 6:12, "Fight the good fight of faith."

The fact that the Lord said to Jacob in Genesis 32:28 that he had prevailed indicated that Jacob had won this battle over his fears of Esau in prayer by clinging to the promises that God made to him to protect and prosper him, and which promises are recorded in Genesis 28:10-15 and 31:3.

There are times when prayer is a struggle in the sense that we must fight the temptation to enter into fear and instead rest in God's promise of protection.

Paul speaks of struggling in prayer.

Colossians 2:1, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea."

By means of meditating in prayer upon the promises that God made to him, which are recorded in Genesis 28:10-15 and 31:3, Jacob was assured that God had a plan for his life. Therefore, because he prevailed in prayer by being fully assured that God had a plan for his life and would keep His promises to protect and prosper him, Jacob in a sense had prevailed over men and in particular Esau.

While in prayer, Jacob came to a point where he was fully convinced that God would protect him and therefore trusted God and by doing so, Jacob appropriated the omnipotence of God so that he would prevail over Esau in the sense that Esau

would not attack him but rather would be conciliatory.

Genesis 32:25b records the Lord dislocating Jacob's hip. The dislocation of Jacob's hip symbolized that by means of the fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, which constituted divine discipline, the Lord had succeeded in getting Jacob to stop trusting in his own power to solve his problems and to depend upon the power of God.

Genesis 32:25

“When he (the Lord) saw that he (the Lord) had not prevailed against him (Jacob), he (the Lord) touched the socket of his (Jacob's) thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him.”

Notice that Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit informs the reader that the Son of God did not overcome Jacob in the wrestling match rather than He “could” not since at any time, the Lord could have crushed Jacob during the match but did not since He is gentle.

“The socket of his thigh” refers to the ball and socket joint of Jacob's thigh since “socket” is the noun *kaph* ([K^] (kaf), which denotes the “acetabulum,” the cup shaped socket in the hipbone that receives the head of the thighbone.

Jacob was physically very strong as witnessed by his moving the large stone from the well of water when Rachel appeared to him for the first time (See Genesis 29:10). However, the fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban had taught Jacob that he was impotent to solve his own problems with Laban by means of his own physical strength and had to rely upon the omnipotence of God to solve his problems with Laban.

Therefore, the dislocation of Jacob's hip during this wrestling match symbolizes what the Lord had accomplished in Jacob through the divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, which was to demonstrate to Jacob his own impotence and God's omnipotence.

During the fourteen years of hard labor for Laban, the Lord had broken Jacob's confidence in his own strength and got him to acknowledge that God was all powerful and all sufficient and that he

was helpless and hopeless and totally and completely dependent upon God.

The divine discipline in the form of fourteen years of hard labor for his uncle Laban humbled Jacob so that he acknowledged his own human weakness or impotence so as to experience the power of God in life and his right to appropriate that power by prayer and claiming the divine promises given to him.

The Lord taught the apostle Paul these spiritual principles.

2 Corinthians 12:1-10

“Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord.”

“I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven.”

“And I know how such a man -- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows -- was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”

“On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.”

“For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.”

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself!”

“Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.”

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults (people testing), with distresses (thought testing), with persecutions (system testing), with difficulties (disaster testing), for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

Therefore, the dislocation of Jacob's hip was symbolic of the Lord breaking Jacob's confidence in his own strength and ability to deal with problems with people.

The dislocation of Jacob's hip would be a perpetual reminder or memorial to Jacob to not depend upon his own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with people and adversities in life.

The dislocation of Jacob's hip is also a reminder to us here in the church age to never depend upon our own human power to solve our problems in adversity with people and circumstances but rather to depend upon the power of God, which is resident in the Word of God and our union and identification with Christ.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

Philippians 4:10-13

“Now, I rejoiced greatly because of the Lord that now at last all of you have revived your consideration for me. In fact, before all of you were always considerate but all of you were always lacking an opportunity.”

“Not that I ever speak because of want since I have learned for myself through the application of doctrine to experience how to be in a habitual state of contentment in whatever present circumstance.”

“I have experienced not only poverty but also I have experienced prosperity. By means of every circumstance and by means of all kinds of situations I am intimately acquainted with not only satiation, but also starvation, not only prosperity, but also destitution.”

“I possess the power to overcome all kinds of situations by means of the one whose doctrine empowers me.”

In Ephesians 1:19, Paul prayed that the Holy Spirit would enlighten the Ephesian believers regarding the exercise of the omnipotence through the resurrection, ascension and session of Christ that has been made available to them through their union with Christ, which gives them the capacity to overcome the devil, his cosmic system and the sin nature.

Ephesians 1:18, “I make it a habit to pray that the eyes of our heart would receive enlightenment for the purpose of knowing for certain what is the confidence of His calling and what are the glorious riches, which is His inheritance distributed among the saints.”

In Ephesians 1:18, Paul is praying that the Holy Spirit would enlighten the Ephesian believers so that they will know without a doubt what is the confident assurance of their election to privilege and their eternal inheritance that they possess because of their eternal union with Christ.

Every church age believer has the opportunity to receive his eternal inheritance if he fulfills the condition of being faithful in executing the Father's will for his life and which can be forfeited due to unfaithfulness.

Although the believer's salvation *cannot* be merited but is received when a person expresses faith alone in Christ alone, the believer's inheritance on the other hand is meritorious meaning he has to fulfill the condition of being faithfully obedient to the will of God till physical death or the rapture (i.e. resurrection of the Church).

Ephesians 1:19, “And what is the surpassing greatness of His divine omnipotence directed towards all of us who are believers. This is in accordance with the operative power, namely, the possession of power to overcome (the sin nature, the devil and his cosmic system) originating from His manifested power (through the resurrection and session of Christ).”

“Power” is the noun *dunamis*, which refers to the inherent power of God and thus it refers to God’s attribute called omnipotence.

“Working” is the noun *energeia*, which means, “operative power” and is a reference to the exercise of God’s omnipotence through the resurrection, ascension and session of Christ.

“Strength” is the noun *ischus*, which means, “possession of power to overcome” and refers to the 100% availability of divine omnipotence that has been made available to every church age believer because of their union with the Christ that provides them “the power to overcome” Satan and the kingdom of darkness and the old Adamic sin nature.

“Might” is the noun *kratos*, which means, “manifested power” and refers to the omnipotence of God that has been “manifested” in history through the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:20, “Which He (the Father) exercised through the Person of Christ by raising Him (Christ) out from among the dead and by seating Him (Christ) at His right hand in the heavenlies.”

“In Christ” indicates that the Ephesian believer’s confidence, election, eternal inheritance and power to experience victory over the devil and the flesh are all found in their eternal union and fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:21-23

“Far above each and every ruler and authority and command and dominion and each and every rank that has been bestowed, not only during this period of history, absolutely not, but also during the coming one.”

“Furthermore, He (the Father) subjected each and every thing under His (Christ’s) feet and appointed Him as head over each and every thing for the benefit of the church.”

“Which (church) by its very character and nature is His body, the perfect complement and complete expression (of Christ) who (Christ) at the present time is fulfilling everything for Himself in every respect.”

Ephesians 1:20-22 teaches that the Father has demonstrated His omnipotence in history by promoting the perfect human nature of Christ in hypostatic union to the highest ranking position in the church and His kingdom as a result of His obedience to His will in going to the Cross to die for the sins of the entire world.

In Genesis 32:26, we see the crippled Jacob clinging to the Lord and not letting Him go until the Lord blesses him.

Genesis 32:26

“Then he (the Lord) said, ‘Let me go, for the dawn is breaking.’ But he (Jacob) said, ‘I will not let you go unless you bless me.’”

“Bless” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity” and so therefore, the verb indicates Jacob’s desire that the Lord would endue him with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.”

Like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, the Lord would bless Jacob in the sense that the Lord would multiply his descendants so that his posterity was great in number both, racially and spiritually and multiply his possessions and livestock and prosper him financially.

The Lord would give Jacob the capacity to be prolific in that he would be the progenitor of a multitude of children in both a biological and spiritual sense. He learned through the discipline that God is sovereign and that no one can stop God from blessing him, not even Esau. Jacob also learned that he could not merit the blessing of God, nor could he do anything that could merit the blessing of God.

Proverbs 10:22, “It is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich, and he adds no sorrow to it.”

Therefore, Jacob has learned what God’s grace is all about, namely, that we can not merit the blessing of God because of who we are or what we do, that it is a gift and cannot be earned or deserved.

Jacob exploited his brother Esau’s hunger and got him to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup because he thought he had to do something to get God to bless him. He disguised

himself as Esau in order to deceive his father Isaac who was blind into giving him the blessing of the birthright rather than to Esau because he thought he had to do something to get blessed by God.

Jacob's finally learned that neither Esau or anyone or himself could prevent God from blessing him. He clung to the Lord demanding to be blessed because he now understands that the blessings of God come directly from God and not by cheating and deceiving people.

Jacob had learned through the twenty years with Laban that Esau could neither provide nor prevent the blessing of God and so it was not Esau that stood in the way of Jacob's blessing in the land of Canaan.

On the one hand, it was God Who opposed Jacob and on the other it was Jacob himself, who by means of his deceitfulness and treachery, attempted to produce spiritual blessings through carnal means. Jacob had learned that the blessing of God must be obtained from God himself, and this must be done by clinging to Him in helpless dependence, not by trying to manipulate Him or fighting Esau.

Jacob had learned through the years of divine discipline while living with Laban that he did "not" have to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright instead of Esau but that the blessing of the birthright was based upon God's grace meaning it was a gift that he did "not" earn or deserve.

A comparison of Ephesians 1:3-14 and Ephesians 2:8-10 teaches that we have been not only been saved by grace through faith in Christ but also blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places because of the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross and our eternal union with Him.

Ephesians 1:1-14

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every

spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

"In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us."

"In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth."

"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory."

"In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory."

The prepositional phrases "in Christ," "in Him" and "in the Beloved" indicate that the Ephesian believers were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places "because of their eternal union and identification with Christ" and not because of anything they had done.

Your "position in Christ" refers to the fact that at the moment you believed in Christ, the omnipotence of the Spirit caused you to become identical and united with Christ in His crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and session, and which ministry of the Spirit is called in Scripture, the "baptism" of the Spirit.

This means that when Christ was crucified, God crucified you with Him and when Christ died and was buried, God considers you to have died and been buried with Christ. It also means that when Christ was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father (the session of Christ), God raised and seated you with Him.

Ephesians 2:1-9

“Although, all of you were spiritually dead in your trespasses and sins.”

“in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.”

“Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.”

“even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”

“and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

“so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”

“not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

“Faith” is the noun *pistis* (pivsti\$), which means to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance upon the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ for eternal salvation and thus deliverance from eternal condemnation.

When a person believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior he in effect trusts the witness of the Holy Spirit concerning Jesus Christ who is the object of faith for eternal salvation and it is the object of our faith, Jesus Christ, that gives us eternal life and who has merit before God.

We are saved and blessed with every spiritual blessings in the heavenly places based upon His merits and His merits alone and so faith is the only system of perception that God will accept because it is non-meritorious and is compatible with His grace policy.

“Grace” is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross-and our eternal union with Him.

Grace is God treating us in a manner that we don’t deserve and excludes any human works in order to acquire eternal salvation. Grace means that God saved us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do.

The grace of God is directed towards us in God the Father’s provision for salvation in the impeccable unique Person and finished work of Christ on the Cross and after salvation it is the Word of God and His provision of the Spirit as the believer’s true teacher and mentor. The grace of God is God’s provision for salvation through the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross and a post-salvation relationship with Him through the Word, the Nature and Spirit of Christ.

Grace excludes any human merit in salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none.

Grace is the result of the function of all the divine attributes, without compromising the divine integrity.

The unique Person of the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work on the Cross-is the source of grace (2 Cor. 8:9) and is a gift from the Father (2 Cor. 9:15).

2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

2 Corinthians 9:15, “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

The grace of God is extended to the entire human race through the unlimited atonement and the offer of salvation to all men (1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 4:10).

Titus 2:11, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men."

The message of God's saving act in Christ is described as the "gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24), and the "word of His grace" (Acts 20:32; cf. 14:3).

The only thing required of the hearer of the Gospel is to make the non-meritorious decision to believe in Jesus Christ for salvation.

By His grace, God justifies the undeserving and unworthy through faith in His Son Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24).

Romans 3:23-24, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

Jesus Christ was full of "grace and truth" (John 1:17).

John 1:17, "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ."

The believer receives the grace of God through Him (John 1:16).

John 1:16, "For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."

It is by the grace of God that Jesus Christ died a substitutionary spiritual death for all mankind (Heb. 2:9); therefore, the throne in which Christ sits is a "throne of grace" (Heb. 4:16).

Hebrews 2:10, "But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."

Grace is an absolute since it is no longer grace if we are saved on the basis of human works (Rom. 11:6).

Romans 11:6, "But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."

A Christian is someone who is a "partaker" of the grace of God (Phil. 1:7) and grace is the Christian's sphere of existence (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor.

1:3; Col. 1:2) since he is to live by the same principle of grace after salvation (Col. 2:6; Rom. 6:4) and the believer who rejects this principle is said to have "fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:1-5).

In Genesis 32:27-28, we have the account of the Lord changing Jacob's name to Israel.

Genesis 32:27

"So he (the Lord) said to him (Jacob), 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.'"

The Lord did "not" ask Jacob his name to solicit information since He is omniscient, rather the Lord did so because He wanted to arouse in Jacob an awareness of his former character reflected in his name and to prepare him for a change of name, which would accurately reflect his new character.

The name given to "Jacob" means, "heel catcher" (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a "deceiver" and a "supplanter," which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

Jacob must have disliked his name since its meaning was not very complimentary but it was an accurate description of his character up to the end of his fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban.

The name "Jacob" was an accurate description of his character that was the result of being a slave to his old Adamic sin nature.

Every person born into the world without exception received the imputation of Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden, thus giving everyone the nature of Adam, which is always disobedient to God and making them all physically alive but spiritually dead, having no capacity whatsoever to have a relationship with God.

Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (when Adam sinned)."

But the fact that every member of the human race possesses a sin nature does mean that the entire human race is qualified for grace, which is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.

Galatians 3:22, "But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

Romans 11:32, "For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all."

In the New Testament, the old sin nature is called the "old self, the flesh," which according to the Scriptures is being corrupted meaning that it is not getting better nor can it be rehabilitated but rather it is getting worse and worse everyday.

The old sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the human body and this is why the apostle Paul in Romans 6:6 calls it the "body of sin" and this is why we need a resurrection body.

The nature of Adam tempts the soul of every human being to sin against God and when a person obeys the sin nature's desires, it produces personal sins-mental, verbal and overt.

1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul."

The Father solved the problem of our old sin nature when He crucified our old sin nature with Christ at the cross and gave us the nature of Christ at the moment of salvation.

Romans 6:6, "knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin."

Ephesians 4:24, "and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."

We, as believers are to accept by faith the fact that we have been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by considering ourselves dead to the sin nature but alive to God because of our union with Christ Jesus. In order to experience victory over the sin nature, the believer must obey the teaching of the Holy Spirit that the believer has been crucified with Christ and raised with Christ.

Romans 6:11, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Galatians 5:24-25, "Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit."

The believer sins because he chooses to disobey the teaching of the Word of God that his sin nature was crucified with Christ at the Cross and thus allows the sin nature to control and influence his soul so that he produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin.

The believer's sin nature will not be totally eradicated until he physically dies or when the rapture of the church takes place when the believer will receive a resurrection body to replace the body he now has, which contains the old sin nature.

1 Corinthians 15:53, "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Genesis 32:27

"So he (the Lord) said to him (Jacob), 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.'"

Genesis 32:28

"He said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.'"

"Israel" is the proper noun *yisra'el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, "one who fights and overcomes with the power of God" since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed.

The bestowal of the name "Israel" upon Jacob constituted the essence of the blessing that he requested from the Lord recorded in Genesis 32:26.

The name *yisra'el*, "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

The statement "you have striven with God and with men" refers to Jacob's problems with Isaac, Esau, Laban, and his wives, which were in reality problems with God since God permitted these

people to come into his life to draw him closer to God.

The Lord's statement "you...have prevailed" refers to the fact that Jacob persevered in prayer by claiming the promises of God's protection and presence and thus praying according to will of God since the promises originated from God (See Genesis 32:9-12).

The Lord's statement "you...have prevailed" also means that Jacob had won his battle over his fears of Esau in prayer by clinging to the promises that God made to him to protect and prosper him (See Genesis 28:10-15 and 31:3).

While in prayer, Jacob came to a point where he was fully convinced that God would protect him and by doing so, he appropriated the power of God so that he would prevail over Esau in the sense that he would reconcile with him. Therefore, the name "Israel" would be a memorial to Jacob that during the fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban he had stopped trusting in his own power to solve his problems and depended upon the power of God.

The dislocation of Jacob's hip and the name "Israel" would be a perpetual reminder or memorial to Jacob to not depend upon his own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with people and adversities in life.

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me."

"Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults (people testing), with distresses (thought testing), with persecutions (system testing), with difficulties (disaster testing), for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

The change of name from "Jacob" to "Israel" marks a change in Jacob's character and reorientation in his life in the sense that no longer does he solve his problems with people by means of deception as denoted by the name "Jacob" but

now solves them with the power of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer.

The change of name indicates that Jacob has grown to spiritual maturity and has oriented himself to the grace of God. Jacob oriented himself to the grace of God in the sense that he has learned that he did "not" have to deceive his father Isaac into giving him the blessing of the birthright instead of Esau but that the blessing of the birthright was based upon God's grace meaning it was gift that he did "not" earn or deserve.

Just as the name "Jacob" reflects character produced by the function of the power of the old sin nature so the name "Israel" reflects character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer.

Genesis 32:29-32 presents to us the record of Jacob naming the place of his wrestling match with the Lord "Peniel" and then crossing it.

Genesis 32:29

"Then Jacob asked him and said, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And he blessed him there."

Jacob asked the Lord what His name was because he could not fathom that he indeed wrestled with God and lived to tell about it.

In Genesis 32:30, Jacob names the place where he had the wrestling match with the Lord "Peniel," because as he said, "I have seen God face to face and yet my life has been preserved."

Therefore, Jacob inquired from the Lord about His identity because Jacob could not believe that he could have wrestled with God and lived to tell about it, it was beyond comprehension that he could have a wrestling match with the Creator. The Lord's response to Jacob's question clearly indicates that Jacob ought to have known who it was who had wrestled with him and spoke to him since in Genesis 32:28, we see that the Lord clearly identifies Himself as *Elohim*, "God."

Hosea 12:5 identifies the Wrestler as being *Yahweh*, "the Lord," which is the covenant keeping name of God.

Hosea 12:3-5

"In the womb he took his brother by the heel, and in his maturity he contended with God."

"Yes, he wrestled with the angel and prevailed; He wept and sought His favor. He found Him at Bethel and there He spoke with us, even the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD is His name."

Yahweh (hw *hy+), "Lord" is the personal covenant name of God emphasizing the "immanency" of God where the Lord intervened in the life of Jacob.

The statement "He (the Lord) blessed him (Jacob)" is "not" a reference to a blessing since the changing of Jacob's name to Israel and the wrestling match itself constituted a blessing. Rather the statement "He (the Lord) blessed him (Jacob)" denotes the Lord saying farewell to Jacob and no longer making Himself visible to Jacob in human form.

Genesis 32:30

"So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, 'I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved.'"

"Peniel" is the proper noun *p^eni'el* (la@yn!P+) (pen-ee-ale), which means, "face of God" and is an abbreviated form of "I have seen God face to face."

Bruce K. Waltke, writes, "The location of the site is uncertain, but a good case has been made for modern Tulul edh-Dhahab, which stands on the bank of Jabbok, four miles east of Succoth" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 447, Zondervan).

Although, Jacob did not get a definitive answer from the Lord as to His name, nonetheless, Jacob definitively identifies the unidentified man as *Elohim*, "God" and to memorialize this he names the place where the wrestling match took place as "Peniel."

The expression "face to face" (*panim `el-panim*) is used only of direct encounters by human beings with deity. The believer will have a face to face encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ as well at physical death when he will absent from the body but face to face with the Lord.

2 Corinthians 5:8, "we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home (*pros*) face to face with the Lord."

Bruce K. Waltke, "God says explicitly to Moses: 'No one may see me and live' (Ex. 33:20). Moses' face-to-face meeting is equated with 'he sees the form of the Lord' (Num. 12:8). In the man Jacob sees a form of the Lord. The intensity of meeting his messenger is equivalent to meeting God face to face. The encounter is both terrifying and intimate" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 447, Zondervan).

The reason why Jacob could wrestle the Lord and live to tell about it is that the Son of God "condescended" to Jacob. The fact that the Son of God "condescended" means that He descended to a less formal or dignified level, namely He appeared as a human being and waived the privileges of His rank as God and assumed equality with Jacob by manifesting Himself as a human being in order to communicate with Jacob.

The Son of God condescended two thousand years ago in Bethlehem when He added to His deity a true, sinless human nature, thus becoming permanently, the God-Man.

John 1:14, "And the Word (Son of God) became flesh (a Man), and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only uniquely born One from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The fact that the Son of God did not destroy Jacob while wrestling with him was a manifestation of His gentleness and gentleness by way of definition is power held in reserve. At any time, the Son of God could have body slammed Jacob through the earth, but did not because He is gentle, His power was held in reserve.

The fact that Jacob survives this encounter with God would reassure him since if he could survive this encounter with the Lord, the Creator and Sovereign ruler of creation, then it follows that he will be rescued in his encounter with his twin brother Esau and should therefore not fear Esau.

The Lord had chosen Jacob to be the progenitor, the father of the nation of Israel, through whom

He, the Lord would come into the world not only in the form of man but as the very Son of Man.

Jacob's encounter with Esau presented the greatest opposition to the accomplishment of the mission God had given him. If Esau were victorious over Jacob, then all of God's plans and promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the promise of salvation to the entire world would be defeated and the world would never have a Savior.

The Lord wanted Jacob to have assurance concerning the importance of the mission that the Lord had given him to carry on the line of Christ and to be the father of the nation of Israel and that the Lord would not allow anyone, not even Esau to stop this mission from being accomplished.

Genesis 32:31

“Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel, and he was limping on his thigh.”

The sun rising was symbolic of Jacob's spiritual condition at this time and symbolized that Jacob no longer was under divine discipline but rather experiencing fellowship with God. The rising sun suggests that Jacob is living now according to the standards of God's holiness, which is love and he is living in obedience to the Word of God and as a result is experiencing fellowship with God.

The name “Peniel” (la@WnP+) (pen-oo-ale) is a variant of “Peniel.”

Genesis 32:32

“Therefore, to this day the sons of Israel do not eat the sinew of the hip which is on the socket of the thigh, because he touched the socket of Jacob's thigh in the sinew of the hip.”

The expression “sons of Israel” is used here for the first time in the Bible and is a designation for the nation of Israel in Moses' day and is not simply a designation for Jacob's sons. Moses informs the reader that the Israelites in his day made it a rule not to eat the sciatic muscle of slaughtered animals as a reminder to them of this encounter that Jacob had with the Lord.

“Sinew” is the noun *gidh* (dyG!) (gheed), which refers to the sciatic nerve, i.e. the central nerve of the hip region.

They were Israelites and not Jacobites, because God touched Jacob and changed His name, and which name was reflective of his spiritual character and walk with God.

This dietary restriction was never imposed upon them by God but was instituted by Israel since they recognized the importance of what Jacob experienced at Peniel. It would be a reminder to the nation of Israel that when Jacob became weak and was disabled, Israel emerged as victorious.

This dietary restriction would be a reminder to Israel to not have confidence in their own strength and ability to deal with problems with other nations. It would be a perpetual reminder or memorial to not depend upon their own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with other nations.

This dietary restriction would be a reminder to the nation of Israel to never depend upon their own human power to solve their problems with other nations but rather to depend upon the power of God.

Genesis 33

In Genesis 33, we see Jacob reconciling with his twin brother Esau.

In Genesis 33:1, we see Jacob, now Israel meeting up with his family and caravan and preparing to meet Esau.

Genesis 33:1

“Then Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, Esau was coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids.”

The statement “Jacob lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold” brings the reader alongside of Jacob, capturing the scene for us, heightening the tension of the narrative, indicating the seriousness and magnitude of the moment.

The four hundred men was the standard size of a militia in the days of the patriarchs (1 Samuel 22:2; 25:13; 30:10; cf. Genesis 14:14).

Prior to Jacob's encounter with the Lord at Peniel, Jacob questioned the purpose of Esau's militia. Was Esau using the four hundred men to attack

Jacob or to receive his brother royally and escort him into the land of Canaan? Jacob's response to the news about Esau and his four hundred men, which is recorded in Genesis 32:7 indicates quite clearly that he was convinced that Esau had come to attack him.

News is known to travel with incredible speed in the Middle East as travelers have reported many times in the past. Esau would have been informed about the arrival of Jacob's caravan through reconnaissance by his men.

Now, from Esau's perspective, based upon his past dealings with Jacob and his knowledge of the prophecy that the "older shall serve the younger" it is understandable that Esau protects himself and his family by going out to meet Jacob with four hundred men just in case Jacob's intentions are hostile.

So Esau would have two questions in his mind, has Jacob come to attack me or is he coming with peaceful intentions? Therefore, Esau would have been arriving with the four hundred men for either one of two reasons, one to protect himself in case Jacob attacks him or to welcome home his brother royally and escort him on home to their father.

Prior to Jacob sending the gifts to Esau as restitution for stealing the blessing of the birthright, Esau would have questioned Jacob's intentions and he too would have been filled with uncertainty and anxiety as to the intentions of Jacob. On the other hand, prior to Jacob's wrestling match with the Lord, Jacob would have been filled with uncertainty and anxiety as to what the intentions of Esau might be.

However, Jacob's fears have been calmed by his conversation with the Lord and Esau's fears would have been calmed by the arrival of the gifts from Jacob. Therefore, we see that God has softened the heart of both men throughout the past twenty years because both have been prospered by God, thus setting the stage for reconciliation between the two rather than war.

So the battle for Jacob has already been won, God has given him the victory without a sword being raised in anger.

1 Samuel 17:47, "the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S."

Therefore, as Jacob approaches his encounter with Esau, he has no fear of being attacked because of the assurance that the Lord gave him at Peniel and is thus walking by faith and trusting in the Lord.

There are several elements to this story of Jacob meeting Esau that indicate quite clearly that Jacob at this point in the narrative is operating in faith and "not" unbelief. The fact that Jacob initiates contact with Esau and even risks sending his beloved wives and children ahead of him to meet Esau indicates quite clearly that Jacob is operating in faith and trusting the Lord to protect him and his family.

If Jacob was afraid of Esau he would never have risked initiating contact with Esau or risk sending his beloved family ahead of him in the path of Esau.

To cross at night with a vast entourage as Jacob did, was a difficult and dangerous operation, which could only be undertaken by moonlight and only under urgent circumstances, which this was. By moving from the northern to the southern side of the Jabbok River, Jacob is placing himself and his family all the more quickly in the path of Esau, who was advancing from Seir in the south.

If he lived in fear of Esau, he would never undertake such an operation and risk his family's safety or his own.

If you recall, Jacob told Laban that he left Paddan Aram in secret out of fear of Laban. If Jacob was afraid of Esau, he would have slipped into the country secretly just as he left Laban in secret out of fear of Laban. Therefore, it is clear that Jacob is operating in faith, resting in the promise of God to protect him and his family and if he wasn't operating in faith, he would never have risked initiating contact publicly with Esau or risk sending his beloved wives and children ahead of him.

Faith produces courage whereas unbelief produces cowardice and so we see that Jacob's faith has produced courage in his soul. Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them

and is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences.

The principle of faith operates quite simply: (1) God speaks and we hear His Word. (2) We trust His Word and act on it no matter what the circumstances are or what the consequences may be.

The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Jacob obeyed the Lord's command to return to Canaan even though there was uncertainty as to Esau's attitude towards him.

Hearing the Word of Christ produces faith in God (Rm. 10:17) and so we see that God's Word motivated Jacob to walk by faith.

Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

The Christian soldier's faith or total and absolute confidence in God's faithfulness to His promises acts as a shield protecting his soul from the attacks of Satan and his kingdom of darkness, which come in the form of thought projections that are designed to produce doubt in God's Word.

Ephesians 6:16, "In addition to everything, I solemnly charge all of you to take up for yourselves your shield, which is your faith because that will enable all of you to extinguish all the flaming arrows originating from the evil one."

Jacob's soul was protected from the attacks by the kingdom of darkness because of his faith in God and His promises.

The believer employs the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, by exercising faith in the Word of God, which is expressed by obedience and results in victory in spiritual combat.

Ephesians 6:17, "Also, I solemnly charge all of you to take hold of your helmet, which is your salvation as well as your sword that originates from the Spirit, which is, as an eternal spiritual truth, God's Word."

1 John 5:4, "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith."

Jacob will experience victory not only in spiritual combat with Satan and the kingdom of darkness but also victory with Esau in that they will be reconciled.

Faith in the Word of God appropriates the omnipotence of God.

Matthew 17:20, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Jacob is not looking at Esau but looking to God and is thus operating in faith and concentrating on the Lord's promise to protect him and is therefore appropriating the omnipotence of God to deal with this mountain in his life in the form of Esau.

God will reward our faith since it pleases Him and so God will reward Jacob for his faith in Him.

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

By initiating contact with Esau and sending his family across the Jabbok, Jacob is taking into account God and acknowledging His character and nature, His presence and His Word in the form of His promise of protection.

Fear is not sin but becomes sin when we do not turn to God in prayer to overcome that fear and do not claim the promise of divine protection. Jacob met his fear and anxiety with prayer and claimed the promises that God had made to him in the past of the divine presence, protection and prosperity.

Psalms 56:3-4, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, in God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?"

Jacob's reconciliation with Esau is a perfect example as to how God turns the hearts of men wherever He wishes.

Proverbs 21:1, "The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes."

The Lord does “not” turn the hearts of men against their will but rather brings in people and circumstances, prosperity and adversity to do this.

According to Genesis 32:7-8, just the day before, Jacob had divided his people and possessions into two companies. The first group was the animals and the second were his people. Esau has already encountered the first group of the animals and now he is about to encounter the people of Jacob’s household.

According to Genesis 33:1, Jacob divides his household into two groups. The first were Jacob’s concubines and their children and they were followed by his primary wives, Leah and Rachel with their children.

Genesis 33:2

“He put the maids and their children in front, and Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last.”

The maids were Zilpah (Leah’s maid) and Bilhah (Rachel’s maid). The children of Zilpah would include Gad and Asher (See Genesis 30:9-13) and the children of Bilhah would include Dan and Naphtali (See Genesis 30:1-8). Leah’s children were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (See Genesis 29:31-35), Issachar, and Zebulun (See Genesis 30:14-21) and Dinah (See Genesis 30:21). Rachel and Joseph would bring up the rear.

So we see that Jacob arranged his family in ascending order of their social status. In the case of Rachel and Leah, they are arranged based upon Jacob’s affections. Jacob doesn’t put Rachel and Joseph at the rear so as to give them maximum protection from Esau since he doesn’t fear Esau attacking him because the Lord reassured him at Peniel that he would be victorious. Rather, Jacob puts Rachel and Joseph at the rear because they were the most precious to him and he wants Esau to meet them last because of this. Unfortunately, the family of Jacob is still plagued by favoritism.

Genesis 33:3

“But he himself passed on ahead of them and bowed down to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.”

Then, we see Jacob passing ahead of his wives and children and putting himself ahead of the entire

group to meet Esau, which is a demonstration of his faith, his confident assurance that God has given him the victory and reconciliation with Esau. Therefore, we see that Jacob has overcome his fear of Esau and which fear has dominated his life prior to his encounter with the Lord at Peniel.

Also, Jacob stands ahead of this great caravan of people and possessions in order to meet Esau first, which is also a great demonstration of leadership. Where Jacob was a coward, Israel is a courageous leader.

Jacob demonstrates the humility he learned while enduring fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban in Paddan Aram by bowing seven times to the ground before Esau. Where Jacob was arrogant, Israel is humble.

Colossians 3:12-13, “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”

This term denotes touching the nose and forehead to the ground in a prostrate position as a symbol of submission before a superior. In the days of the patriarchs bowing to the ground “seven times” is a well attested practice of a vassal to his lord in ancient court protocol. Therefore, Jacob greets Esau as a vassal greets a patron with the ceremony of a royal court.

However, we must not think this act of humility on the part of Jacob was intended as an acknowledgement of servility on his part, but simply as a token of respect and recognition of Esau as ruler of the region.

Proverbs 6:1-3

“My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, have given a pledge for a stranger.”

“If you have been snared with the words of your mouth, have been caught with the words of your mouth.”

“Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself; Since you have come into the hand of your

neighbor, go, humble yourself, and importune your neighbor.”

This act of humility is a demonstration of a spiritual principle.

Romans 12:10, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”

Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

Genesis 33:4

“Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.”

Unlike, Laban who needed to be warned by the Lord to not harm Jacob, Esau does not need to be restrained by God. Esau initiates the physical contact with Jacob since he is by nature impulsive as demonstrated by his exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup simply because he was hungry.

His emotional response is typical of him since we saw him cry uncontrollably when he discovered that Jacob had stolen the blessing of the birthright. Esau’s emotional response here undoubtedly expressed his relief that Jacob was not going to attempt to subjugate him and his family and fulfill the prophecy that the “older shall serve the younger.”

His emotional response towards Jacob is also expressive of his appreciation to Jacob for his thoughtfulness in sending the gifts as restitution, which expressed Jacob’s desire to reconcile.

Notice that the statement “they wept” indicating that both Jacob and Esau were weeping in each others arms. Jacob emotional response also expressed his relief that Esau did not still harbor bitterness towards him for stealing the blessing of the birthright but rather was desirous to reconcile as he was.

During the twenty years apart from each other, Esau realized that Jacob was properly entitled to the birthright and the blessing and that God had chosen Jacob to be in the line of Christ and inherit

the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Esau was able to accept that Jacob was entitled to the birthright and the blessing because in Genesis 33:9 when Jacob urged Esau to take the gifts, Esau replies, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.”

Furthermore, Genesis 36 reveals that God had prospered Esau with possessions and posterity and had made him a great nation, the nation of Edom, which would have given him fulfillment and prevented him from becoming jealous of Jacob’s great prosperity.

For twenty long years the two brothers had neither seen each other or spoke with each other but now all their emotions are released and on full display. Jacob has offered restitution and demonstrated humility towards Esau and Esau in return has forgiven Jacob and the two are reconciled.

Psalm 133:1-3

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!”

“It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes.”

“It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing -- life forever.”

Genesis 33:5

“He lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and said, ‘Who are these with you?’ So he said, ‘The children whom God has graciously given your servant.’”

When Esau sees Jacob’s children, he asks Jacob “who are these with you” and he does so because when Jacob left home twenty years prior, he was unmarried and therefore, childless.

“Graciously given” is the verb *chanan* (/n^j*), which refers to the act of God bestowing Jacob with the gift of four wives and twelve children and indicates Jacob’s recognition that his wives and children were an unmerited gift from God meaning he neither earned or deserved these blessings.

Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross-and our eternal union with Him. Grace is God treating us in a manner that we don't deserve and excludes any human works in order to acquire eternal salvation. Grace means that God saved us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do but rather saved us because of the merits of Christ and His work on the Cross. Grace excludes any human merit in salvation (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none.

Here we see Jacob giving God the credit. He learned through the discipline that he could not merit the blessing of God, nor could he do anything that could merit the blessing of God. Therefore, Jacob has learned what God's grace is all about, namely, that we can not merit the blessing of God because of who we are or what we do, that it is a gift and cannot be earned or deserved.

Jacob tactfully avoids the term *barakh*, "bless" in order to avoid provoking Esau to jealousy and reminding him of the stolen blessings of the birthright. "Tact" is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.

Also, Jacob demonstrates great tact by employing the term *Elohim*, "God" rather than the covenant name of God, *Yahweh*, "Lord" since Esau was not chosen by God to inherit the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.

The fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban have developed in Jacob the ability to use tact in dealing with delicate and difficult situations with people.

Genesis 33:6

"Then the maids came near with their children, and they bowed down."

Genesis 33:7

"Leah likewise came near with her children, and they bowed down; and afterward Joseph came near with Rachel, and they bowed down."

Genesis 33:8

"And he (Esau) said, 'What do you mean by all this company which I have met?' And he (Jacob) said, 'To find favor in the sight of my lord.'"

When Esau asked about the gifts of animals, Jacob replied that they were meant to seek Esau's favor or in other words to seek his forgiveness for stealing the blessing of the birthright twenty years before.

As we noted in our study of Genesis 32:20, when Jacob sent the gifts he states that they were to "appease" Esau meaning the gifts were designed to reconcile or repair their relationship and by implication "cover" the sin that Jacob had committed against Esau some twenty years earlier.

Genesis 32:16 records that Jacob divided the animals into five different droves: first the goats (200 female and 20 male), then the sheep (20 male and 200 female), then camels (30) and their young, then the cattle (40 cows and 10 bulls) and then the donkeys (20 female and 10 male).

With this gift, Jacob was attempting to offer "restitution" to Esau and make amends for actions against Esau when he had deceived his blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright to him rather than Esau.

Genesis 33:9

"But Esau said, 'I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.'"

Notice that Esau never mentions God once in their conversation and Jacob eventually mentions God twice. The fact that Esau does not mention God once does "not" mean that he was an atheist but it does indicate that he is an unbeliever and has failed to acknowledge the hand of God in his life.

The etiquette of the Middle East in that day required Esau to make a show of refusing the gift and Jacob to press it on him.

According to Isaac's prophecy concerning Esau recorded in Genesis 27:39-40, Esau acquired his possessions through war and not by farming or shepherding as Jacob did. Of course, God gave Esau the victories on the battlefield and was thus the source of Esau's prosperity.

Genesis 33:10

“Jacob said, ‘No, please, if now I have found favor in your sight, then take my present from my hand, for I see your face as one sees the face of God, and you have received me favorably.’”

“Present” is the noun *minchah* (h^j*n+n!), which refers to the gift of the five droves of animals that served as restitution for Jacob stealing the blessing of the birthright twenty years before.

Jacob’s statement to Esau, “I see your face as one sees the face of God” is not flattery meant as if Jacob had been overjoyed to see Esau as one would see the face of God since that would be obnoxious and insincere. Rather, the statement means that Jacob saw in Esau’s acceptance of him a reflection of God’s grace because he knew that it was God Himself who had changed Esau’s heart so that he could be reconciled to his brother Esau.

As we noted in Jacob’s wrestling match with the Lord recorded in Genesis 32:24-32, during the fourteen years of divine discipline Jacob had learned of the power and importance of persevering in prayer, which is called by theologians, “prevailing prayer.”

The wrestling match between God and Jacob was “symbolic” of Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. Therefore, by means of persevering in prayer with God, Jacob had solved his problems with Esau.

Now that Esau had welcomed him with open arms, Jacob saw that looking on the face of his brother was like looking on the face of God. The one was the result of the other. God, not Esau, had been the obstacle to Jacob’s entry into Canaan.

Now that he had prevailed with God by means of petition and clinging to Him by faith, Esau was no longer a foe, but a friend. Therefore, Jacob’s statement to Esau, “I see your face as one sees the face of God” implies that Jacob acknowledges God’s sovereignty in his life in that God and not Esau had prevented him from reentering the land of Canaan.

The fact that the Lord attacked at Jabbok before reentering Canaan also indicates this to be the case.

Genesis 33:11

“Please take my gift which has been brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me and because I have plenty. Thus he urged him and he took it.”

The fact that Esau accepted Jacob’s gift of five droves of animals and did not reciprocate indicates that Esau has accepted Jacob’s gift as settlement for Jacob stealing the blessing of the birthright twenty years before.

Notice that Esau only took the gift after Jacob had insisted indicating that Esau had forgiven Jacob long ago and did not need the gift to pacify him. From God’s perspective offering the gifts to Esau was the right thing for Jacob to do since our Lord taught His disciples that if horizontal relationships with people are not right because of sin, then they are not right in their vertical relationship with God.

For instance, if we don’t forgive our fellow believers, then God won’t forgive us in the experiential sense and thus we won’t be restored to fellowship (Mt. 6:14-15; Mt. 18:21-35). So, if we have sinned and injured someone whether his or her property or reputation, we must confess it to the injured party and offer restitution, which in some cases, restitution could simply involve an apology.

Sins against society and against one another require civil restitution for experiential forgiveness before God and men, thus, the thief steals, realizes his sin, and confesses to God and his victim, then makes restitution, and God forgives him.

Unlike the conflict with Laban that was settled with a non-aggression pact, the conflict with Esau is resolved through the accurate application of the Word of God, genuine expressions of humility and tact and consideration of others.

The reconciliation between Esau and Jacob is sealed with the acceptance of this reparation gift. Esau’s acceptance is witnessed by Esau’s four hundred men and by Jacob’s entire household just as Abraham’s claim to Ephron’s cave and field was sealed when Ephron accepted the payment before witnesses.

In Genesis 33:12-16, we see Esau departing from Jacob.

Genesis 33:12

“Then Esau said, ‘Let us take our journey and go, and I will go before you.’”

“Let us take our journey” is the verb *nasa`* (US^n*) (naw-saw), which means, “to pull up” stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for “breaking camp.”

Now, remember Esau has four hundred men who serve as Esau’s military and were therefore, accustomed to traveling at a swift pace. On the other hand, Jacob could not travel fast but could only go at the pace of the cattle and his children. Therefore, Jacob is hindered by the animals in his flocks and herds that are nursing and the children in his household.

In fact, they had just completed a very difficult and arduous journey from Paddan Aram to the Mount Gilead region, which was over three hundred miles. So Jacob is smart and knows full well he can’t continue to drive his flocks and family at such a pace because they will die of exhaustion.

Genesis 33:13

“But he (Jacob) said to him (Esau), ‘My lord knows that the children are frail and that the flocks and herds which are nursing are a care to me. And if they are driven hard one day, all the flocks will die.’”

“Frail” is the adjective *rakh* (lr^), which means, “tender” in the sense that the children in Jacob’s household could not physically or emotionally withstand the hardships and sustained efforts of a trip to Seir, which the adults in his household were capable of withstanding.

“Which are nursing” is the verb *`ul* (lWu) (ool), which designates the feeding activity of the young domestic animals.

“Knows” is the verb *yadha`* (ud^y*) (yaw-daw), which means, “to discern” meaning that Esau could “perceive by sight, see, recognize, or apprehend clearly” that the children in Jacob’s household and the animals among his flocks that were nursing were incapable of withstanding another long trip to Seir.

This verb indicates that Jacob is “not” lying or deceiving Esau or making an excuse for not going to Seir with Esau. But rather he is saying to Esau that he could see for himself that the children in his household and the animals in his flocks that were nursing were incapable of withstanding another long trip to Seir like the one they just completed from Paddan Aram.

As we can see Jacob is declining taking a journey with Esau’s militia because he has too many young children and too many of his flocks and herds are nursing their young and if driven hard one day, would die on the journey.

Genesis 33:14

“Please let my lord pass on before his servant, and I will proceed at my leisure, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my lord at Seir.”

Jacob employs deferential language when addressing his brother Esau, using the terms “my lord” and “his servant,” which demonstrates the humility he learned while enduring fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban in Paddan Aram by bowing seven times to the ground before Esau.

We must not think this deferential language on the part of Jacob was intended as an acknowledgement of servility on his part, but simply as a token of respect and recognition of Esau as ruler of the region.

Believers are commanded in the Word of God to defer to one another and consider each other as more important than themselves.

Romans 12:10, “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor.”

Philippians 2:3, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.”

Esau offers to accompany Jacob in a southerly direction however Jacob declines the offer, not because he is afraid of Esau or that he did not trust him, which is indicated in that when Jacob approached his encounter with Esau, he had no

fear of being attacked because of the assurance that the Lord gave him at Peniel.

The fact that Jacob passed ahead of his wives and children and put himself ahead of them to meet Esau demonstrated that he had no fear of his twin brother but was a demonstration of his faith, his confident assurance that God has given him the victory and reconciliation with Esau.

Therefore, it is clear that Jacob did not fear or mistrust Esau prior to meeting him or even after making contact with him since Jacob was operating in faith, resting in the promise of God to protect him and his family. If he was living in unbelief, he would have never have initiated contact with Esau.

Also, another factor indicating that Jacob would have no mistrust or fear Esau at this point in the narrative is that the two had reconciled as demonstrated by Esau accepting Jacob's gift before witnesses as restitution for stealing the blessing of the birthright from Esau.

Jacob declined Esau's offer because Jacob's caravan had to travel slowly due to the presence of young children and large flocks, which were nursing their young whereas Esau's soldiers would have been impatient with Jacob's slow pace.

The second reason why Jacob declined Esau's offer to travel with him to Seir but did not mention it to Esau was that the Lord commanded him to return to the land of Canaan (See Genesis 31:3) and even promised him possession of it (See Genesis 28:13).

The fact that Jacob doesn't mention to Esau that the Lord had promised him the land of Canaan and commanded him to return to it does "not" mean that Jacob has lost sight of what the Lord said to him but rather he is being tactful. "Tact" is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations.

The fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban have developed in Jacob the ability to use tact in dealing with this delicate situation with Esau. Jacob demonstrates great tact in that he avoids mentioning that the Lord commanded him to return to Canaan in order to avoid provoking Esau to jealousy and reminding him that God did

not choose him to inherit the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant, which would include possession of the land of Canaan.

By demonstrating tact with Esau, Jacob, now Israel was loving his neighbor as himself and treating others the way that he would want to be treated.

Mark 12:28-31

"One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, 'What commandment is the foremost of all?'"

"Jesus answered, 'The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'"

"The second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Matthew 7:12, "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

Obviously, Esau knew that Jacob had returned for just this reason yet Jacob wanted to avoid mention of it because he was sensitive to Esau's feelings. During the twenty years apart from each other, Esau realized that Jacob was properly entitled to the birthright and the blessing and that God had chosen Jacob to be in the line of Christ and inherit the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Esau was able to accept that Jacob was entitled to the birthright and the blessing because in Genesis 33:9 when Jacob urged Esau to take the gifts, Esau replies, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own."

Furthermore, Genesis 36 reveals that God had prospered Esau with possessions and posterity and had made him a great nation, the nation of Edom, which would have given him fulfillment and prevented him from becoming jealous of Jacob's great prosperity.

Jacob's reference to visiting Esau in Seir does not mean that Jacob planned to go directly to Seir, but rather it meant that he would visit him by himself in the future without the flocks and family as indicated by his use of the personal pronoun "I" instead of "we," which would of course denote his entire family.

Scripture does not record whether Jacob ever made such a trip but this doesn't mean he didn't take it either.

Genesis 33:15

“Esau said, ‘Please let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.’ But he said, ‘What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.’”

Esau then offered Jacob a portion of his men to accompany him for protection but Jacob declines this offer as well. Jacob declined this offer from Esau because Jacob was confident in the Lord's promise to protect him and be with him as witnessed by the Lord's protection of him while dealing with both Laban and Esau. Therefore, he saw no need for this military presence to protect him since he had faith and was totally and completely confident that the Lord was with him and would protect him from any and every possible adversary.

Genesis 33:16

“So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir.”

Jacob politely refuses Esau's offer of men and Esau agrees to Jacob's request and headed back to Seir. "Seir" is the proper noun *se`ir* (ryu!C@) (say-er), which is a mountainous region located primarily east of the Gulf of Aqaba, but west as well and was originally settled by the Horites, also known as the Hurrians, a non-Semitic people dispersed throughout the ancient Near East.

Eventually, the descendants of Esau, the Edomites took over the land and so therefore, Seir was also synonymously called Edom (Genesis 32:3; 33:14, 16; Joshua 24:4; cf. Genesis 36:1, 39).

Genesis 33:17 records Jacob settling temporarily in Succoth to rest his flocks and family before reentering the land of Canaan. Genesis 33:18-20 presents to us the record of Jacob moving from

Succoth, crossing the Jordan River and returning to the land of Canaan and settling in Shechem.

Genesis 33:17

“Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built for himself a house and made booths for his livestock; therefore the place is named Succoth.”

“Journeyed” is the verb *nasa`* (us^n*) (naw-saw), which means, “to pull up” stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for “breaking camp.”

“Succoth” is the proper noun *Sukkoth* (tw)Ks |) (sook-koth), which means, “shelters” and implies a temporary stay at this location and was located east of the Jordan River, near the Jabbok River.

“House” is the noun *bayith* (ty!B^) (bah-yith), which denotes a permanent structure built of solid supports and materials including doorposts, walls, a roof, and stone, plaster and wood materials.

“Booths” is the noun *sukkah* (hK*s |) (soo-kaw), which denotes a temporary shelter or stalls for livestock.

The fact that Jacob builds a house and stalls for his livestock at Succoth signifies that Jacob intended to have a prolonged stay at this place before crossing the Jordan into Canaan. This does “not” imply that Jacob was disobeying the Lord's command to return to Canaan since Genesis 33:18 records that Jacob eventually journeyed to Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan. Rather, Jacob wanted to stay for a period of time at Succoth in order to recoup what he gave away to Esau and to give his young children and the nursing animals a chance to recover from the long and difficult three hundred mile journey from Paddan Aram.

Jacob was not disobeying the Lord by delaying his entrance into the land of Canaan by staying at Succoth but rather he was concerned about the health of his family and flocks and wanted to give them time to recover. Remember, the members of Jacob's caravan had been under great strain because of the problems with leaving Laban and not knowing how Esau would respond to Jacob when reentering the land of Canaan.

Jacob's entourage had traveled well over three hundred miles since their departure from Paddan

Aram and would have been exhausted. Therefore, he temporarily settled in Succoth for the sake of his family and flocks in order to give them all a rest and it helped that the pasture in Succoth was great.

Furthermore, we must remember that Jacob was crippled by the Lord at Peniel when the Lord dislocated his hip in the wrestling match and so I'm sure he was exhausted as well from all the travel and wanted to settle down to rest.

Some commentators believe that Jacob was delaying so as to avoid his father Isaac who was blind and was deceived by Jacob some twenty years before into bestowing upon him the blessing of the birthright rather than Esau, Isaac's favorite son. However, they fail to consider that if Esau who threatened to kill Jacob twenty years before had forgiven Jacob, how much more would his father Isaac who was old at this time, forgive him.

Some commentators contend that Succoth was north of the Jabbok because they identify it with "Sakut," which is on the other side of the Jordan, about ten miles north of the mouth of the Jabbok. Consequently, they argue that Jacob was going backwards and not forwards towards the land of Canaan, thus indicating his disobedience to the Lord's command to return to Canaan. However, they fail to consider Judges 8:4-9, which implies that Succoth was "south" of the Jabbok since this passage records that Succoth was east of the Jordan River but much closer to the Jordan than Peniel, which was north of the Jabbok River.

The fact that the Scriptures are silent about Jacob crossing back over the Jabbok is further indication that Succoth was "not" north of the Jabbok but rather south.

Furthermore, since Jacob was so concerned with the condition of his flocks, which were nursing and the young children in his caravan, he would by no means even consider performing once again the difficult operation of fording the Jabbok River!

Jacob had no reason to avoid reentering Canaan since the greatest threat to his life, Esau, had forgiven him and they were now reconciled. Therefore, Jacob stopped at Succoth simply for the sake of his flocks and young family just as he stated to Esau.

In fact, we have the following statement in Genesis 33:18, "Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan" which implies that Jacob stays in Succoth was for the safety and well-being of his family and flocks and was a temporary stay and stepping stone before entering Canaan.

Also, Jacob had every reason for quickly returning to Canaan since the Lord had promised him possession of the land. Therefore, Jacob's stay at Succoth, which was just outside of the land of Canaan, was temporary even though he built a house and shelters for his flocks and herds since all hindrances for returning were now removed (Esau) and the Lord promised him and his descendants the land of Canaan as a permanent possession.

Genesis 33:18

"Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city."

Genesis 33:18 begins the final section of the account of Isaac's line and extends to Genesis 35:29. Genesis 25:19-35:29 constitutes the eighth book in Genesis presenting to us the family history of Isaac and in particular Jacob whose name was changed by the Lord to "Israel." Genesis 33:18-20 forms the prelude for the events recorded in Genesis 34 where Jacob's sons exact revenge upon Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah.

The Scriptures are silent as to how long Jacob stayed at Succoth before he entered the land of Canaan and settled at Shechem.

"Safely" is the adjective *shalem* (<|@v*) (shaw-lame), which means, "being complete, whole, total" or "full," thus in context the word means that Jacob and his caravan arrived back "safe and sound" in the land of Canaan.

The fact that Jacob had arrived safely in the land of Canaan fulfilled Jacob's request of the Lord at Bethel to bring him back safely to the land of Canaan (See Genesis 28:21).

"Shechem" is the proper noun *sh^hkhem* (<k#v+) (shek-em), which means, "safe and sound" and is approximately thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem,

directly west of the Jabbok River and approximately twenty miles from the Jordan in the land of Canaan.

“Shechem” was located in the heart of the Promised Land at the commercial crossroads of Canaan in the pass between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. The city was the place where Abraham first camped when he arrived in Canaan from Haran and is the place where he built an altar to worship the Lord in response to the Lord appearing to him and promising him and his descendants the land of Canaan (See Genesis 12:6-7).

The two prepositional phrases “in the land of Canaan when he came from Paddan Aram” alert the reader that the Lord has fulfilled His promise to Jacob at Bethel just prior to entering into exile with Laban in Paddan Aram to bring him back home to Canaan (See Genesis 28:15).

Genesis 33:19

“He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money.”

“Piece” is the noun *chelqah* (חֶלְקָה) (khel-kaw), which refers to a well defined field or tract of land.

“Land” is the noun *sadheh* (סַדְהָה) (saw-deh), which means, “field” and refers to a well defined field or land without walls or fences.

Therefore, Jacob buys a tract of land for his flocks just outside the city of Shechem as indicated by the statement in Genesis 33:18 that Jacob “camped by the city” and in Genesis 33:19 by the phrase “where he had pitched his tent.”

The name “Hamor” literally means, “donkey,” and he was the father of Shechem who raped Dinah according to Genesis 34 and Genesis 34:2 records that “Hamor” was a Hivite, which is significant.

At times the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called “Canaanites” but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called “Canaanite” (Nm. 13:29). Therefore, “Hamor” was a Canaanite and the Canaanites were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah recorded

in Genesis 9:24-27 and thus Jacob’s family could not intermarry with the Canaanites.

Genesis 9:25-27

“So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.’”

“He also said, ‘Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.’”

“May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; And let Canaan be his servant.”

“Canaan” was the “youngest” son of Ham according to Genesis 10:6 and his descendants of Canaan are listed in Genesis 10:15-20 and 1 Chronicles 1:13-16.

Genesis 9:25 is a revelation of the decree of God, which is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future of the descendants of Canaan who were the descendants of Noah’s youngest son Ham. This decree is simply a declaration of God’s sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future concerning Canaan’s descendants.

Noah does “not” pronounce a curse upon Ham but rather his youngest son Canaan since it would be Canaan’s descendants, the Canaanites who according to the Bible were idolatrous and involved in gross immorality and the occult.

Noah was “not” punishing Ham’s youngest son Canaan for what Ham did but rather simply issuing a prophecy concerning the nation of Canaanites that would come from Ham through Canaan.

The Canaanites would not suffer the curse and the bondage because of the sins of Ham but rather because of their own sins. God was simply looking down the corridors of time and in His omniscience saw what would take place in the future in regards to the descendants of Canaan and through Noah, the Holy Spirit revealed this to Noah’s sons.

The phrase “servant of servants he shall be to his brothers” refers to universal or worldwide servitude since Noah predicted that Canaan would be both a “servant” to Shem and Japheth meaning that the Canaanites would be servants to not only

one nation or one other group of nations but to “all” other nations.

Remember, all the nations existing today descended from Noah’s three sons, therefore, when Noah says that Canaan would serve his brothers, he means that their servitude would be universal.

Genesis 9:25-27 was written on behalf of Israel and the history of the Canaanites would be of great interest to Israel since the Lord had promised Israel the land of the Canaanites. The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). The Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19).

Now, we must remember that this curse upon Canaan was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it. An example is Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite and placed her faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ and after a period of purification, was brought into Israel’s society. Therefore, Jacob and his descendants, the Israelites can have nothing to do with the Canaanites and this is witnessed by the fact that Abraham prohibited Eliezer his servant from getting Isaac his son a Canaanite woman and Isaac issued the same prohibition to Jacob.

Genesis 33:19

“He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money.”

The designation “Shechem’s father” anticipates the events of Genesis 34 where Shechem whose father is Hamor rapes Jacob’s daughter Dinah.

“Money” is the noun *qositah* (hf*yc!q()) (kes-ee-taw), which is the name of a Hebrew monetary weight of unknown weight and value.

The exact price is recorded in Genesis 33:19 signifying that the sale was final and incontestable. By allowing Jacob, now Israel to buy land and settle among them, the Canaanites and

specifically, the Hivites were hoping to intermarry with Jacob’s family and this we have seen was prohibited by the Lord as stipulated in the prophecy of Noah.

If you recall in Genesis 23, Abraham sought to buy a piece of property as a permanent possession from the Hittites in order to bury his wife and Sarah. We saw that the Hittites were reluctant to sell their land to Abraham as a permanent possession, which expressed a pervasive and deep rooted attitude throughout the Middle East.

Knowing this reluctance on the part of Middle East landowners in the days of the patriarchs, the fact that Hamor was willing to sell a piece of property to Jacob was significant in that it demonstrated the desire of Hamor to marry into the family of Jacob, which was very wealthy.

The wealth of Jacob’s family was very appealing to Hamor, making Jacob’s family appealing to intermarry with and thus Hamor was more than willing to part with a piece of property. This intermarriage would mean that the Canaanites would absorb Jacob’s clan, making them a part of their culture and people, both of which were decadent. Therefore, Jacob has made a bad decision by purchasing this tract of land belonging to the Canaanites. The consequences of this decision are keenly felt in Genesis 34, which records the rape of Jacob’s daughter Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor.

Now, we must understand that the purchase of the land by Jacob and the building of the altar were done by him in faith and were a testimony to the faith of Jacob in the Lord’s promise to give him the land of Canaan. However, Jacob’s decision to purchase land from the Canaanites lacked discernment in the sense that he could not perceive clearly and understand the dangerous situation he put himself in since the Canaanites sold him the land in the hopes of intermarrying with his family, which he was prohibited from doing.

His decision to purchase land from the Canaanites lacked acuteness of judgment and understanding of the consequences of such a purchase since the Canaanites sold Jacob the land in the hopes of intermarrying with his family, which he was prohibited from doing according to the prophecy of Noah.

Discernment stresses accuracy in reading character or motives and so Jacob's decision to purchase land from Hamor lacked discernment since Jacob did not accurately read the character and motive of Hamor in selling him the tract of land.

Jacob's decision to purchase land and build an altar to the Lord at Shechem was lacking in discernment since it was not God's will that he build the altar at Shechem but at Bethel since he had made a vow to the Lord over twenty years before to build an altar at Bethel and worship the Lord there (Genesis 28:20-21).

Jacob proposed to give a tithe to the Lord, which would provide the means to build and maintain the altar to worship the Lord, which the pillar began.

Genesis 33:20

“Then he erected there an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel.”

The building of the altar was designed so that Jacob with his family and servants could publicly worship the Lord, which expressed Jacob and his household's total dedication and devotion to the Lord.

“El-Elohe-Israel” literally means, “God, the God of Israel” signifying that Jacob is identifying his new self with the living God and claims the land in his name and would distinguish Israel from the Canaanites whose language they speak (See Genesis 31:47).

By assigning this name to the altar he constructed, Jacob was testifying publicly that the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac was also his God as well (See Genesis 28:21).

Although Jacob returned to the land of Canaan, he was wrong to settle at Shechem since he made a vow to the Lord to Bethel to return there and build an altar to worship the Lord in thanksgiving for prospering, and protecting him while in exile and fulfilling His promise to return him safely to the land of Canaan.

Once he departed from Succoth, he should have kept right on going to Bethel. There was no reason for Jacob to stop just twenty miles to the west at Shechem. So it appears that Jacob was getting lazy and procrastinating. He had just experienced a

great victory spiritually with Esau but it appears he got complacent and lazy and procrastinated.

Throughout his life, Jacob demonstrates tremendous passivity as in the case of letting his mother Rebekah manipulate him until the age of forty and his inability to confront Laban for twenty years for cheating him of his wages. His passivity was demonstrated also with his wives, where he let them order him around and treated him as a stud for hire.

Jacob's lack of discernment resulting in his failure to go to Bethel and fulfill his vow to the Lord there resulted in the rape of Dinah since if he went to Bethel as he should have, the rape of Dinah would never have taken place.

Genesis 34

Genesis 34 gives us the record of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi killing Shechem, his father Hamor and all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for Shechem raping their sister Dinah.

In Genesis 34:1-4, we read of Shechem, son of Hamor raping Jacob's daughter by Leah, namely, Dinah.

If you recall, in Genesis 33:18-20 we saw Jacob moving from Succoth, crossing the Jordan River and returning to the land of Canaan and settling in Shechem. Then, in Genesis 33:19 we saw him buying a tract of land from Hamor who was a Hivite and the Hivites were called “Canaanites.”

The Canaanites were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 and thus Jacob's family could not intermarry with the Canaanites.

If you recall, Abraham prohibited Eliezer his servant from getting Isaac his son a Canaanite woman and Isaac issued the same prohibition to Jacob. By allowing Jacob, now Israel to buy land and settle among them, the Canaanites and specifically, the Hivites were hoping to intermarry with Jacob's family and this we have seen was prohibited by the Lord as stipulated in the prophecy of Noah.

This intermarriage would mean that the Canaanites would absorb Jacob's clan, making them a part of their culture and people, both of which were decadent. Remember, the Lord has made Jacob

extremely wealthy and so he would be appealing to the Canaanites to intermarry with. Therefore, Jacob has made a bad decision by purchasing this tract of land belonging to the Canaanites. The consequences of this decision are keenly felt in Genesis 34, which records the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor.

Now, we must understand that the purchase of the land by Jacob and the building of the altar were done by him in faith and were a testimony to the faith of Jacob in the Lord's promise to give him the land of Canaan. However, Jacob's decision to purchase land from the Canaanites lacked discernment in the sense that he could not perceive clearly and understand the dangerous situation he put himself in since the Canaanites sold him the land in the hopes of intermarrying with his family, which he was prohibited from doing.

His decision to purchase land from the Canaanites lacked acuteness of judgment and understanding of the consequences of such a purchase since the Canaanites sold Jacob the land in the hopes of intermarrying with his family, which he was prohibited from doing according to the prophecy of Noah.

Discernment stresses accuracy in reading character or motives and so Jacob's decision to purchase land from Hamor lacked discernment since Jacob did not accurately read the character and motive of Hamor in selling him the tract of land.

Jacob's decision was lacking in discernment since it was not God's will that he build the altar at Shechem but at Bethel since he had made a vow to the Lord over twenty years before to build an altar at Bethel and worship the Lord there (See Genesis 28:20-21).

Although Jacob returned to the land of Canaan, he was wrong to settle at Shechem since he made a vow to the Lord to Bethel to return there and build an altar to worship the Lord in thanksgiving for prospering, and protecting him while in exile and fulfilling His promise to return him safely to the land of Canaan.

Once he departed from Succoth, he should have kept right on going to Bethel. There was no reason for Jacob to stop just twenty miles to the west at Shechem. So it appears that Jacob was getting

passive and lazy and procrastinating. He had just experienced a great victory spiritually with Esau but it appears he got complacent and lazy and procrastinated.

Throughout his life, Jacob demonstrates tremendous passivity as in the case of letting his mother Rebekah manipulate him until the age of forty and his inability to confront Laban for twenty years for cheating him of his wages. His passivity was demonstrated also with his wives, where he let them order him around and treated him as a stud for hire.

Jacob's lack of discernment resulting in his failure to go to Bethel and fulfill his vow to the Lord there resulted in the rape of Dinah since if he went to Bethel as he should have, the rape of Dinah would never have taken place.

Genesis 34:1

“Now Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to visit the daughters of the land.”

Dinah is the seventh child that Leah bore to Jacob and only girl and her birth is recorded in Genesis 30:21.

Jacob did not have other daughters besides Dinah (cf. 37:35 and 46:7). In Genesis 46:7-19, the term “daughters” is used with reference to Jacob's “granddaughters” and not to other daughters besides Dinah since Dinah is singled out as being his only daughter and the daughters of Jacob's son are listed. The term for “daughters” in the Hebrew can be used to describe a “granddaughter” and not just a “daughter.”

The name “Dinah” (דִּינָה) (dee-naw) means, “judgment” since the name is the feminine form of the word *din* (/yD!) (deen) meaning “judgment.”

The long definition of Dinah's relationship to her parents is unusual indicating that Dinah did not receive the love and affection that she should have from her father Jacob because she was the daughter of Leah who Jacob did not love as much as Rachel. It implies that Jacob was indifferent towards Dinah because he loved Rachel more than her mother Leah.

Her brothers Simeon and Levi were also affected by Jacob's indifference since they take the law

into their own hands as the result of their father's indifference to their sister's rape.

Bruce K. Waltke, "The narrator's continual identification of the father-daughter relationship exposes the shame of Jacob's passivity in the events that follow" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 461).

The noun *na'arah* (נַרְאָה), "her" in Genesis 34:3 indicates that Dinah was of marriageable age meaning she was approximately thirteen or fourteen years of age.

Also indicating that Dinah was approximately thirteen or fourteen years of age at this point in the narrative is that in Genesis 34:4 the noun *yalah* (יָלַח), which means, "young girl" is used to describe her.

Dinah's decision to leave her family's encampment to enter a Canaanite city without a chaperone was improper since in the ancient world girls of a marriageable age would not leave a rural encampment to go unchaperoned into an alien city. It was also a poor decision because Jacob's family who were Shemites as we have noted were not to have relationships with the Canaanite because of their godless and immoral lifestyle.

However, Dinah's bad decision to associate with the Canaanite women is directly related to her father's poor example when he purchased land from Hamor who was a Canaanite. So Dinah's decision to associate with the Canaanite women was a case of "like father, like daughter."

As we have noted, the Canaanites sold Jacob the land because they wished to intermarry with him because he was very wealthy. Dinah's rape came about because Jacob failed to exhibit appropriate distancing from the Canaanites and as a result exposes her to sexual defilement from the Canaanites who were notoriously sexually immoral. Therefore, the rape of Dinah is the result of poor leadership and passivity of Jacob her father.

Genesis 34:2

"When Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, saw her, he took her and lay with her by force."

Genesis 34:2 records that "Hamor" was a Hivite, which is significant. The Hivites settled in the land of Canaan and were displaced by Israel under Joshua (Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 23:23; 33:2; 34:11; Deut. 7:1; Josh. 9:1).

At times the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called "Canaanites" but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called "Canaanite" (Nm. 13:29).

Therefore, "Hamor" was a Canaanite and the Canaanites were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 and thus Jacob's family could not intermarry with the Canaanites.

As we noted earlier, Abraham prohibited Eliezer his servant from getting Isaac his son a Canaanite woman and Isaac issued the same prohibition to Jacob. In fact, in Genesis 26:35, Esau's Hittite wives who were also Canaanites brought grief to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah because their godless lifestyle was repulsive to his parents who possessed a covenant relationship with the Lord.

Not only did Abraham seek a wife for Isaac among the Arameans rather than the Canaanites but also Isaac did as well for Jacob. The reason for this is that Abraham and Isaac and the Arameans were descendants of Shem (i.e. Semitic) who according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 were in the line of Christ.

Unlike the Canaanites, Aramean women embraced the faith of their husbands, unlike the Canaanite women who seduce their husbands to join their lifestyles (See Genesis 24:4; 26:34-35; 31:50).

The Canaanites were idolatrous (Deut. 29:17), involved in the occult (Deut. 18:9-10) and gross immorality (Lev. 18), which archaeology confirms. The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). The Canaanites were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19).

Shechem's father was Hamor who was the leader of the Hivites who Jacob purchased property from just outside the city.

Notice that Genesis 34:2 describes Hamor as the prince of the land and not the city "because the city-state of Shechem in pre-Israelite times extended its control over a vast area that at one time included the central hill country as far as the borders of Jerusalem and Gezer to the south and Megiddo to the north, a domain of about 1,000 square miles. Egyptian and Akkadian texts reflect this situation" (The JPS Torah Commentary, The Jewish Publication Society, page 233).

Hamor is described as a "prince" and not with the usual designation for the head of a Canaanite city-state. His unusual title indicates that as ruler of Shechem he had dominion over rural territory as well as the urban center.

This title does "not" mean that he had absolute power however and in fact Genesis 34:20-23 reveals that he does not act as a king in this situation with Dinah since he calls a town meeting in order to present his plans before the citizens and obtains approval by means of persuasive argument rather than by a royal decree.

"Took" is the verb *laqach* (jq^l*), which means that Shechem sent messengers to "fetch, retrieve, summon" Dinah in order to add her to his harem.

"Lay" is the verb *shakhav* (bk^v*) (shaw-kahv), which is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex such as Lot's daughters with Lot (19:32-35); the Philistines with Rebekah (26:10); Shechem with Dinah (34:2, 7); Reuben with Bilhah (35:22); Potiphar's wife with Joseph (39:7, 10, 12, 14).

"By force" is the verb *anah* (hn^u*), which is in the piel (intensive) stem indicates that Shechem "raped" Dinah.

Under the Mosaic Law, which was not yet given to the nation of Israel at this point in history, Shechem would have been compelled to marry Dinah and pay fifty shekels, which was an unusually large present ("bride-price") to her father.

Deuteronomy 22:28-29, "If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days."

Genesis 34:3

"He was deeply attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the girl and spoke tenderly to her."

The statement "He (Shechem) was deeply attracted to Dinah" literally means in the Hebrew that his "soul clung" to Dinah's soul.

"Was deeply attracted" is the verb *davaq* (qb^D*), which denotes the passionate aspect of personal love for the opposite sex, though it is not used of sexual intimacy but rather conveys the sense of loyalty, fidelity, commitment and affection for someone.

"Loved" is the verb *ahav* (bh@a*) (aw-haiv), which denotes Shechem's sexual attraction for Dinah, which the Greeks called *eros*.

This same verb is used of Jacob's love for Rachel in Genesis 29:18.

As we noted in our studies of Genesis 30, the Greek's used four different verbs to denote the concept of "love": (1) *Erao* (e)ravw (verb), (2) *Stergo* (stergwv) (verb), (3) *Phileo* (filevw) (verb), (4) *Agapao* (a)gapavw (verb).

The verb *erao* (e)ravw and the noun *eros* denote a "possessive" love between a man and a woman, which involves longing, craving, and sexual desire.

Stergo means, "to feel affection" and is used especially of the mutual love of parents and children and can also be used of the love of a people for their ruler, the love of tutelary god for the people and even of dogs for their master.

The verb *phileo* denotes the affection and attraction of people towards one another who are close together both inside and outside the family and it includes concern, care and hospitality, also love for things in the sense of being fond of.

The verb *agapao* is often used in the classical Greek to denote friendship between equals, or sometimes sympathy and sometimes *agapao* took on the meaning of “to prefer, to set one good or aim above another, to prioritize, to esteem one person more highly than another.”

The noun *eros* was a general love of the world seeking to satisfy itself wherever it can thus making no distinctions. *Eros* is determined by a more or less indefinite impulsion towards its object and was a self-serving love.

In Genesis 34:4, the verb *davaq* expresses Shechem’s *phileo* love for Dinah whereas ‘*ahev*’ denotes his *eros* love towards her.

The statement He “spoke tenderly to her” in the Hebrew literally means that Shechem “spoke to the heart of the young woman who is of the age to be married.” This statement reveals that after the rape Shechem attempted to comfort Dinah and assured her that he loved her and would do right by her and marry her.

In fact, to demonstrate that he was a man of his word, he took her into his own house according to Genesis 34:26. These three verbs in Genesis 34:4 express Shechem’s tender love and affection for Dinah and commitment to marry her and offset the three verbs in Genesis 34:3 that express his sexual aggression and lack of self-control.

Genesis 34:4

“So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, ‘Get me this young girl for a wife.’”

Since marriages were arranged in the days of the patriarchs we see Shechem ordering his father to negotiate with Dinah’s family so that he can marry her.

Shechem’s command “Get me this young girl for a wife” reveals at least three things about his personality and character.

First of all, it reveals that he is a spoiled little rich boy who gets whatever he wants since he is the son of top of politician in the town and is impolite and never says “please.”

Secondly, it reveals the depth of his physical and emotional attraction to Dinah in that he must have her as his wife.

Thirdly, it reveals Shechem’s desire to do right by Dinah after taking her by force and raping her.

As we noted earlier, Deuteronomy 22:28-29 does not prescribe death for the rape of an unmarried or unengaged woman but marriage with a heavy monetary penalty and without possibility of divorce if the father consents (cf. Exodus 22:16-17; 2 Samuel 13:16). The picture given to us in Genesis 34:2-4 is that Shechem’s aggressive sexual behavior towards Dinah has turned to personal love, affection and care and concern for Dinah to the extent that he is willing to commit to her and marry her.

The fact that Hamor never rebukes his son Shechem for raping Dinah and Shechem never apologizes to Dinah for his conduct reveals that the Shechemite or Canaanite culture was immoral and decadent and raping a woman was a common occurrence in Canaanite towns.

In Genesis 34:5-7, we have the record of Jacob’s response to the rape of his daughter Dinah as well as the reaction of his sons. Genesis 34:8-12 records Shechem’s father Hamor proposes that Jacob’s family intermarry with his.

Genesis 34:5

“Now Jacob heard that he (Shechem) had defiled Dinah his daughter; but his sons were with his livestock in the field, so Jacob kept silent until they came in.”

“Defiled” is the verb *tame’* (am@f*) (taw-may), which means that Shechem’s rape of Dinah “dishonored” or, “disgraced” her because he was an uncircumcised man, an unbeliever and not a part of the covenant people led by Jacob, now Israel.

This expression “he (Shechem) had defiled Dinah” expresses the seriousness of Shechem’s rape of Dinah since it was a crime against God’s covenant people, which Dinah was a part of and it was an attack on God’s holiness and a crime that affected the entire community alienating it from God.

God’s holiness expresses His purity of His character or moral perfection and excellence and means that God can have nothing to do with sin or sinners. He is totally separate from sin and sinners unless a way can be found to constitute them holy

and that way has been provided based upon the merits of the impeccable Person and Finished Work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

The term “holiness” has become an obscure term. Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines “holiness”, “the quality or state of being holy; sanctity” and they define “sanctity”, “sacred or hallowed character.”

One of the definitions that Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary gives for the adjective “holy” is, “entitled to worship or profound religious reverence because of divine character or origin or connection with God or divinity.” Therefore, “holiness” pertains to the absolute perfection of the divine character.

One of the definitions for the noun “character” that Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary provides is that “character” is “the aggregate of features and traits that form the apparent individual nature of some person or thing.”

If we paraphrase this definition, and give it a spiritual application we would say that the “holiness” of God is “the aggregate (i.e. sum total) of perfect features and traits that form the nature of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.” Thus, God’s holiness is related to all of His divine attributes or in other words, it is simply the harmony of all His perfections or attributes.

1 Chronicles 16:10, “Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.”

1 Peter 1:14-16, “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, “YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.”

Therefore, the rape of Dinah by Shechem was not only a serious crime against Dinah herself but a crime against God’s covenant people, Israel and thus an attack upon God’s holiness, which was represented by the covenant people, Israel.

The phrase “his (Jacob’s) daughter” emphasizes the relationship between Jacob and Dinah, which leads the reader to expect a fierce and angry reaction from Jacob, like David upon hearing of

the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13:21). However, instead, Jacob says and does absolutely nothing but rather waits until his sons arrive.

The statement “Jacob kept silent” condemns Jacob’s passivity and indifference to the rape of his daughter and violence against the covenant people of God, Israel, which was an attack upon God’s holiness, which Israel represented to the world. Though silence may be appropriate under certain circumstances, the use of the phrase “his daughter” and the statement, “Jacob kept silent” are used by the narrator Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in order to condemn Jacob’s indifferent and passive behavior.

There should have been “righteous indignation” i.e. justified anger on the part of Jacob not only because of what Shechem did to his daughter but also because it was an attack on God’s covenant people, Israel and thus an attack upon the Person of God, and thus His holiness, which Israel represented before the world.

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the narrator Moses censures Jacob’s passivity and indifference in the face of his daughter’s rape by contrasting his reaction to that of his sons. They were furious but Jacob was not thus reflecting once again that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah who is the mother of Dinah.

Evidently, Jacob did not consider the rape of his own daughter important enough to immediately send for his sons. It appears that after Jacob dealt with the problems of Laban and Esau, that he didn’t want to deal with any more problems but rather wanted to spend the rest of his life in peace and tranquility, with no problems. However, this problem with Dinah he brought on himself because he failed to depart from Succoth and go directly to Bethel to fulfill his vow to the Lord to build an altar to worship the Lord there.

Genesis 34:6

“Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him.”

Initially, the negotiations between the two families begin with father speaking with father but then Jacob’s sons take over the negotiations from their father once they have arrived. As we have noted in our study of the marriage of Rebekah and Isaac, it

was customary for the brothers to negotiate the marriage of their sisters.

Genesis 34:7

“Now the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard it; and the men were grieved, and they were very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done.”

Once Jacob's sons heard of the rape of their sister they head in from the field. How they found out is not revealed and who told them is not revealed as well but we can assume that word traveled quickly through the countryside of their sister's rape and quickly reached their ears.

The intense emotional reaction of Jacob's son upon hearing of the rape of their sister, which is justified stands in stark contrast to the lack of emotion and apparent indifference on the part of Jacob to the crime against his own daughter.

Jacob's lack of emotion demonstrates that he does not consider the rape a moral outrage and an attack against God's covenant people, who he is the leader of and therefore if an attack on God's people it is an attack upon God's holiness. Jacob's reaction to the rape of his daughter is comparable to that of Shechem and his father Hamor, who both find nothing offensive about the rape.

Both men feel that since Shechem truly loves Dinah, they can overlook the crime and simply settle the matter by negotiating a financial settlement for the marriage, which appears to be what Jacob desired since later he rebukes his sons for killing Hamor and Shechem and does not express moral outrage for the crime.

Jacob's response to his son's killing Shechem and his father Hamor for the rape of their sister Dinah indicates that Jacob at this point in his life wanted no trouble and lived in fear of the Canaanites. Therefore, he was willing to overlook the crime against his daughter and his people and feels he would provoke the Canaanites to violence if he became angry with them over the rape of Dinah.

The angry reaction of Jacob's sons exposes Jacob's passivity and indifference and lack of

moral outrage against this attack upon God's covenant people, Israel.

The causal clause “because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, for such a thing ought not to be done” presents the “reason” why Jacob's sons were enraged and burning with righteous indignation.

“Disgraceful thing” is composed of the noun *n^evalah* (hl*b*n+) (nev-aw-law), which means, “disgraceful” and the adverb *m^e'odh* (da{m+), which means, “very,” therefore, the rape of Dinah was considered by Jacob's sons as “very disgraceful” since it was a flagrant violation of the moral standard in Israel.

The term “Israel” is an “anachronism” meaning it is not used of Jacob but rather for the nation that originated from him, thus indicating that Jacob's sons considered the rape of their sister, not only a crime against her but a crime against their nation, which demanded action.

Apparently, the sons of Jacob appreciated the honor bestowed upon them as a family and believed in the promises the Lord bestowed upon Abraham, Isaac and their father Jacob that their family was to carry on the line of Christ and to inherit the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant. They believed in the promises given to Abraham, Isaac and their father Jacob and knew that their family was destined to be the greatest of all the nations, from which the Messiah would come.

Jacob's sons knew and believed in God's purpose to raise up a holy nation through their family and that maintaining national integrity and purity was essential to assure God's continued blessing upon them. Not only did they resent the rape of their sister for the sake of their sister Dinah but also because it disrupted that national purity.

The statement “for such a thing ought not to be done” means that for society's own self-protection, such heinous crimes such as rape and murder can never be tolerated or left unpunished in the society of the nation of Israel or in any civilized society.

The question arises as to what kind of punishment should be administered to Shechem. Under the Mosaic Law in Israel, the rape of an “unengaged”

woman like Dinah did “not” demand the death penalty but required restitution in the form of fifty shekels be paid by the offender to the family of the victim, which constitutes the “bride-price” and the offender was required to marry the victim if the father agreed to it and the offender could never divorce her.

Exodus 22:16-17, “If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged, and lies with her, he must pay a dowry for her to be his wife. If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the dowry for virgins.”

Deuteronomy 22:25-29

“But if in the field the man finds the girl who is engaged, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lies with her shall die.”

“But you shall do nothing to the girl; there is no sin in the girl worthy of death, for just as a man rises against his neighbor and murders him, so is this case.”

“When he found her in the field, the engaged girl cried out, but there was no one to save her.”

“If a man finds a girl who is a virgin, who is not engaged, and seizes her and lies with her and they are discovered, then the man who lay with her shall give to the girl's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall become his wife because he has violated her; he cannot divorce her all his days.”

Deuteronomy 22:28-29 involved the case where a “single” woman was seized and raped and the crime was discovered. Since this did not involve a breach in a relationship, as it did with adultery, the punishment was less.

Deuteronomy 22:25-27 involves a case where a woman is raped who is engaged to another man. The offender was to be put to death since legally she was considered married to the man she was engaged to, thus it would constitute adultery on the part of the offender, which demanded the death penalty. Of course, the engaged woman who was raped was not put to death because the sex was against her will.

Genesis 34:8

“But Hamor spoke with them, saying, ‘The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter; please give her to him in marriage.’”

Jacob’s sons take control of the negotiations with Hamor. Hamor’s statement “the soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter” expresses the fact that Shechem is infatuated with Dinah.

Amazingly, yet demonstrating their immoral degeneracy, neither Shechem nor his father Hamor offer an apology for the crime or express any remorse whatsoever. Hamor speaks as if the rape of Dinah had never occurred, which further infuriates her brothers. He deals with the family of Jacob only on account of his son’s love interests and omits mention of the crime as though nothing had ever happened.

Furthermore, Dinah is held captive in Shechem’s home and is never brought home, which again further enrages Jacob’s sons and well it should have.

Genesis 34:9

“Intermarry with us; give your daughters to us and take our daughters for yourselves.”

Hamor proposes marriage between his and Jacob’s family, which is out of the question for the family of Jacob since the Canaanites were under a curse according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27.

Later on the Mosaic Law prohibited the Israelites from intermarrying with the Canaanites since the latter would take the former away from their relationship with God and lead them into idolatry, which would result in divine discipline upon the nation of Israel (See Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

Satan, who is the great enemy of the nation of Israel, is behind this proposal since acceptance of this proposal would have meant the absorption of the Israelites by the Canaanites and the loss of their identity, thus preventing the birth of the Messiah.

The question arises as to how Jacob’s sons were to secure wives for themselves in the land of Canaan if they were prohibited from marrying Canaanite women. After the conflict between the Arameans

and Jacob, the option of returning to Paddan Aram to secure a wife was essentially ruled out.

More than likely, since Jacob had four different wives, they could have married among themselves even as Esau married the daughters of Ishmael. Also, Jacob's sons could have married Canaanite women if they accepted Christ as their Savior and adhered to having their children circumcised, which was required by God of His covenant people.

Remember that this curse upon Canaan was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it. An example is Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite and placed her faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ and after a period of purification, was brought into Israel's society.

Genesis 34:10

“Thus you shall live with us, and the land shall be open before you; live and trade in it and acquire property in it.”

Hamor presents an economic proposal to Jacob and his sons and urges them to consider the economic advantages of such an arrangement. This economic proposal would be very tempting to the family of Jacob who were nomadic herdsman and therefore, resident aliens.

A resident alien was a person who moved into an area where he had neither land nor clan ties and would be without traditional tribal legal support and protection and would be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. Therefore, the proposal to Jacob and his sons by Hamor would be tempting since it would be a valuable provision to resident aliens like Jacob and his sons and would meet the basic need of a resident alien.

However, it also presents the greatest temptation and obstacle to the covenant people of God, Israel, namely the lust of the eyes and flesh. This temptation originates with the cosmic system of Satan and is one that God's people have been frequently exposed to throughout history. This economic proposal is based upon intermarriage with the Canaanites and so therefore by accepting it, would be disobeying God's will, which prohibited marriage to the Canaanites.

Acceptance of this proposal would in effect be love for the cosmic system of Satan, which believer's are prohibited from doing (See 1 John 2:15-17). So Hamor's economic proposal would be appealing to the lust patterns of the old Adamic sin natures of Jacob's family as well as the lust of their eyes. Therefore, Satan has inspired this economic proposal to take Jacob's family away from the plan of God for their family.

Also, in Genesis 34:23, Hamor's proposal was designed to absorb all the wealth of Jacobs' family into Shechemite society.

Genesis 34:11

“Shechem also said to her father and to her brothers, ‘If I find favor in your sight, then I will give whatever you say to me.’”

Shechem interrupts his father Hamor and begins to speak to both Jacob and Dinah's brothers, inviting them to name their price for the bride-price.

Genesis 34:12

“Ask me ever so much bridal payment and gift, and I will give according as you say to me; but give me the girl in marriage.”

The terms “bridal payment” (Hebrew: *mohar*) is a reference to the “bride-price” which refers to the compensation paid to the family of the bride for the loss of the bride's presence and services and her potential offspring and would demonstrate proof to the bride's family that she would be well cared for by bridegroom.

The “bride-price” must not be confused with a “dowry,” since the latter was provided by the bride's family whereas the former was provided by the groom.

In the case of a rape of an unengaged virgin, the Mosaic Law demanded payment of fifty shekels of silver and marriage without the possibility of divorce according to Deuteronomy 22:28-29.

The “gift” refers to a ceremonial gift that would be given to Dinah.

Shechem's offer expresses the fact that he recognizes that he needs to make restitution for the rape of Dinah.

Shechem's demand "Give me the girl in marriage" demonstrates his infatuation, personal love and affection for Dinah.

"Girl" is the noun *na`arah* (hr*u&n^), which signifies that Dinah was of marriageable age meaning she was approximately thirteen or fourteen years of age and was considered a "young woman."

Genesis 34:13-17 records Jacob's sons responding to Hamor and Shechem's proposals by deceitfully proposing circumcision as the condition to be met by them and their constituents in order for Jacob's family to accept Hamor's proposals.

Genesis 34:13

"But Jacob's sons answered Shechem and his father Hamor with deceit, because he had defiled Dinah their sister."

Genesis 34:14

"They said to them, 'We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is uncircumcised, for that would be a disgrace to us.'"

Genesis 34:15-16

"Only on this condition will we consent to you: if you will become like us, in that every male of you be circumcised, then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters for ourselves, and we will live with you and become one people."

Genesis 34:17

"But if you will not listen to us to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and go."

Genesis 34:25 reveals that Simeon and Levi are involved in these negotiations with Shechem and his father Hamor and are the ones who hatched the deceitful plan to propose that the men of Shechem submit to circumcision as the condition to be met in order for Jacob's family to accept Hamor's proposals.

In Genesis 49:5-7, Jacob under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit rebukes Simeon and Levi for their conduct in dealing with the rape of Dinah indicating that these two alone hatched the plan

and that Jacob was totally unaware of their intentions and was thus innocent of murder.

The fact that Jacob's sons responded to Hamor's proposals with deceit reveals that the fruit does not fall too far from the tree since Jacob's sons manifest the deceitful character that originated from the old Adamic sin nature of their father Jacob.

At the moment of physical birth, every person born into the world without exception receives the imputation of Adam's original sin in the Garden of Eden (See Genesis 5:12-21) and this results in every person possessing the disobedient nature of the first Adam (See Romans 5:12-19). The nature of the first Adam is always disobedient to God and tempts the soul of every human being to commit mental, verbal and overt acts of sin against God (See Romans 5:12-19; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 2:11).

"Circumcised" is the verb *mul* (lWm) (mool), which refers to the act of cutting of the foreskin of the male's penis and was given as a sign to Abraham and his biological descendants that they were set apart by God and yet was not given to justify or save them.

Genesis 17:9-14 records that the Lord gave Abraham and his descendants the ritual of circumcision to observe as a sign to ratify the covenant that He established with Abraham when he left Haran.

The ceremony of circumcision consisted in cutting away the foreskin, the hood or fold of skin covering the head of the male organ, which was generally done by means of a sharp knife, but in more primitive times sharp stones were used (Ex. 4:25; Josh. 5:2, flint knives).

The sexual act and reproductive organs and processes were created by God to be enjoyed by both the man and the woman in marriage and received the full blessing of God (Gen. 1:28; 9:1). But with the Fall of Adam and the Woman, the sex organs and sex act became vehicles of sin and corruption since Satan led man into sexual debauchery, corrupting the institution of marriage in every conceivable way in order to stop God's purpose for man and his redemption. Therefore, we see a symbolic meaning of the act of

circumcision where the cutting of the foreskin spoke of a surgical removal, a complete separation, from the sins of the flesh so widely prevalent in the world around Abraham and his descendants.

The nations and tribes around Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were involved in sins largely centered in the misuse of the male organ in adultery, fornication and sodomy. Circumcision symbolized to the Jewish man that he was a member of an elect nation, a peculiar people, distinctly holy before God, in relation to sexual conduct, so it came indirectly to speak of holiness in every phase of life. Therefore, the organ of the male body that was used for procreation is consecrated to God (cf. Deut. 30:6; Jer. 4:4) and failure to submit to circumcision demonstrated one's overt unwillingness to obey the Lord.

Leviticus 20:7, "You shall consecrate yourselves therefore and be holy, for I am the LORD your God."

According to Genesis 17:9-14 and Romans 4:1-11, circumcision was to be the distinguishing mark upon the organ of procreation among Abraham's biological descendants, the Jews who had entered into the Abrahamic covenant and served as confirmation of Abraham's lineage to fulfill their covenantal responsibility. The ordinance of circumcision could "not" save man but was to be the distinguishing sign of the Jewish nation from the other nations.

God has not commanded circumcision of the flesh for Christians (Acts 15; Galatians 5). Circumcision of the flesh is useless unless there is a circumcision of the heart, which refers to exercising faith alone in Christ alone resulting in regeneration. Therefore, faith in Christ is what is important to God and not whether you are circumcised or not.

Deuteronomy 30:6, "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live."

Colossians 2:11, "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without

hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ."

Abraham was first justified by his faith and then he was given circumcision as a badge or a mark that he was saved and set apart by God (See Romans 4:1-13). The 1st Church Council in Jerusalem that is recorded in Acts 15 recognized in the Scriptures that a Jew does not get saved through the practice of circumcision but through faith alone in Christ, thus the Gentiles were not required to be circumcised.

Galatians 6:15, "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation."

Therefore, even if the Shechemites submitted to circumcision, they did not become a member of God's covenant people and were still under the Canaanite curse unless they exercised faith in the God of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ. The moral outrage as expressed by Jacob's sons towards the rape of their sister was totally justified and appropriate but the manner in which they dealt with the rape of their sister was "not" justified and totally inappropriate. They dishonored God by using circumcision as the means to immobilize Shechem and Hamor and their subjects so that they could be murdered. The very holiness that Jacob's sons honored by expressing anger over the rape of their sister Dinah, they dishonored by murdering the Shechemites.

Jacob and his sons should have done the following in dealing with this problem with the rape of Dinah. First of all, they should have prayed to God for guidance in this difficult situation.

Secondly, they should have immediately demanded that Dinah be returned to them and refused to negotiate her marriage to Shechem since the latter was a Canaanite and Jacob's family was prohibited from intermarrying with Canaanites according to Noah's prophecy recorded in Genesis 9:24-27. The only possible way that they could have entered into negotiations with Shechem was if he accepted the Lord as His Savior and then submitted to the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, which is circumcision.

As we noted under the Mosaic Law in Israel, the rape of an unengaged or unmarried woman like

Dinah did not require the death penalty. But rather, it would have required fifty shekels of silver being paid to the victim's family as the bride-price and there would not be a possibility of divorce if the father of the victim agreed to marriage (See Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:25-29).

However, in Jacob's day, the Mosaic Law was not yet given and furthermore, Dinah was not raped by an Israelite but rather by a Canaanite and the family of Jacob was prohibited from intermarrying Canaanites because of the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27. Therefore, if Shechem did not become a believer and then submit to circumcision, then Jacob and his sons should have asked for the return of Dinah.

No military action would have been required but rather Jacob and his sons should have simply taken Dinah and then separated from the Canaanites as they should have done in the first place. However, if Shechem did not return Dinah, then that would have been considered an act of war, which would have called for military action in order to rescue Dinah.

If Shechem did return Dinah, then Simeon and Levi should have done nothing to him and his father and the inhabitants of their city but rather should have waited for the Lord to deal with Shechem and Hamor in His perfect timing.

Romans 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,' says the Lord."

The military action taken later by Simeon and Levi when they killed all the men of the city of Shechem was totally unnecessary and inappropriate because Dinah was not a prisoner of war but rather the object of a man's infatuation and love and affection (See Genesis 34:3, 19)!

In Genesis 34:18-24, we see Shechem and Hamor deceitfully selling to their subjects the proposed condition of circumcision so as to get Jacob's sons to agree to their intermarriage and economic proposals.

Genesis 34:18

"Now their words seemed reasonable to Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son."

The terms of the agreement did not sound strange to Shechem and Hamor since circumcision was not exclusive to Israel. But was also performed by several Asian Oriental groups such as the Muslims as well as the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and was also practiced by Egyptian priests and those who wanted to be initiated into their sacred mysteries.

Circumcision among these nations was a rite of passage but was not performed on infants, thus the sign of circumcision given to Abraham to be performed on infants eight days old was unique in the ancient world. Therefore, Shechem and his father Hamor agree to the condition of circumcision without hesitation.

Of course, this would have been against the will of God since the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 prohibited the Israelites from intermarrying with the Hivites who were a branch of the Canaanites. Furthermore, circumcision was "not" the means by which a Gentile became a part of God's covenant people Israel, but rather it was through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, the fact that the Shechemites agreed to submit to circumcision without having faith in the Lord God, Jesus Christ was meaningless and thus the condition was meaningless and deceitful.

Jacob's sons were correct in opposing the mixing of the chosen seed with the seed of the Canaanites but wrong in adopting the means they selected to achieve their end. This demonstrates that they were "chips off the old block," Jacob since they too, like their father in his younger days, thought that the ends justified the means.

Shechem and Hamor readily agree to the terms of the agreement because it was their intent to intermarry with the Israelites all along and dispossess them of their possessions. This is indicated in that Shechem and Hamor sold Jacob a tract of land, which was unusual since Middle East landowners in the days of the patriarchs were reluctant to sell land to nomadic herdsman like Jacob.

If you recall in Genesis 23, Abraham sought to buy a piece of property as a permanent possession

from the Hittites in order to bury his wife Sarah but the Hittites were reluctant to sell their land to Abraham as a permanent possession, which expressed a pervasive and deep rooted attitude throughout the Middle East.

Knowing this reluctance on the part of Middle East landowners in the days of the patriarchs, the fact that Hamor was willing to sell a piece of property to Jacob was significant in that it demonstrated the desire of Hamor to marry into the family of Jacob, which was very wealthy.

The wealth of Jacob's family was very appealing to Hamor, making Jacob's family appealing to intermarry with and thus Hamor was more than willing to part with a piece of property. This intermarriage would mean that the Canaanites would absorb Jacob's clan, making them a part of their culture and people, both of which were decadent.

Genesis 34:19

“The young man did not delay to do the thing, because he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. Now he was more respected than all the household of his father.”

“Delighted” is the verb *chaphets* (Jp@j*) (khaw-fates), which expresses Shechem's “infatuation” with Dinah and his great sexual desire and personal love towards her because of her physical beauty and character as a person.

“Infatuation” is the state of having a foolish, unreasoning and all-absorbing passion for someone. Shechem's infatuation with Dinah gave him a lack of discernment so that he was blinded by the real intent of the terms of the agreement presented to him and his father by Jacob's sons.

The statement “he (Shechem) was delighted with Jacob's daughter (Dinah)” corresponds with the statement in Genesis 34:3.

The statement “he (Shechem) was more respected than all the household of his father” means that Shechem was respected among his fellow Hivites because of his high social position as the son of Hamor and his accompanying wealth as the son of Hamor. This statement does “not” mean that he was respected or honored because of his character

but rather because of his high social position and that he was as a result very wealthy.

Shechem's social status among the Hivites would enable him to sell to his fellow citizens the terms of the agreement presented to him by Jacob's son.

Genesis 34:20-21

“So Hamor and his son Shechem came to the gate of their city and spoke to the men of their city, saying, ‘these men are friendly with us; therefore let them live in the land and trade in it, for behold, the land is large enough for them. Let us take their daughters in marriage, and give our daughters to them.’”

In the days of the patriarchs, the gate of the city was the place where the elders of the city held a council to discuss both public and private business and legal transactions as well as plans for war. A city gate was the physical symbol of collective authority and power and was usually made of monumental edifices shading the narrow passageway and side chambers of the city entrance and it was here that the elders and officials sat on stone benches to adjudicate legal matters and discuss local affairs.

The phrase “their city” appears twice in Genesis 34:30 emphasizing the power and authority that Shechem and his father Hamor possessed over the Hivites in the city of Shechem.

Hamor as ruler of Shechem had dominion over rural territory as well as the urban center but did not have absolute power since he does not act as a king in that he calls a town meeting in order to present his plans before the citizens and obtains approval by means of persuasive argument rather than by a royal decree.

A comparison of Genesis 34:9-17 with Genesis 34:20-24 reveals that Hamor and Shechem say nothing about their own personal involvement in the matter, namely that Shechem desires to marry Dinah. They begin by attempting to sell their fellow Hivites on the economic advantages of intermarriage with the Israelites.

Their statement “these men (Jacob's sons) are friendly with us” reveals their lack of discernment and that the deception of Jacob's sons was successful.

Genesis 34:22

“Only on this condition will the men consent to us to live with us, to become one people: that every male among us be circumcised as they are circumcised.”

In Genesis 34:22 Hamor and Shechem present to their fellow citizens the condition attached to the agreement with the Israelites, namely, all their males must be circumcised.

Genesis 34:23

“Will not their livestock and their property and all their animals be ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will live with us.”

In Genesis 34:23, Hamor and Shechem present to their fellow citizens the economic advantages of intermarrying with the Israelites and accepting the condition attached to the agreement.

“Livestock” is the noun *miqneh*, which refers to sheep and goats.

“Property” is the noun *qinyan* (/n^q*) (kin-yawn), which denotes that which refers to the Israelites’ material possessions.

“Animals” is the noun *b^ehemah*, which refers to all types of “domestic animals,” which are creatures that are four footed and whose habitat is on land.

A comparison of Genesis 34:10 with Genesis 34:23 reveal that Hamor and Shechem say nothing to their fellow Hivites that they had promised the Israelites that by intermarrying with them that the Israelites could acquire Hivite property.

Instead they say to their fellow citizens that by agreeing to the condition of the agreement with the Israelites that they the Hivites would absorb the Israelite livestock, property and domestic animals. This reveals that the Hamor and Shechem’s proposal of intermarriage with the Israelites was designed to absorb the wealth of the Israelites and dispossess them of their possessions and so they are guilty of double dealing.

Like many political leaders in the world today, Hamor and Shechem make their own lust appear to be in the interest of the community. Hamor and Shechem were not only dishonest and deceitful towards the Israelites but also with their own fellow citizens. They were being deceitful with the

Israelites just as the Israelites were being deceitful with them.

Genesis 34:24

“All who went out of the gate of his city listened to Hamor and to his son Shechem, and every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his city.”

The Hivites agree to submit to circumcision in order to take advantage of the Israelites and gain wealth and without faith in Jesus Christ. The Hivites agree to circumcise all their males because of their love for money and possessions, which will subsequently lead to their deaths.

1 Timothy 6:10, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

Luke 12:15, “Then He said to them, ‘Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.’”

Little did Hamor and Shechem and their constituents realize that Jacob’s sons were out to avenge the rape of their sister Dinah.

Romans 12:19, “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”

The repetition that appears in the statement “every male was circumcised, all who went out of the gate of his (Hamor’s) city were circumcised” underscores that not one male was left to defend the city.

The phrase “all who went out of the city” is a military term indicating that all the men of Shechem that were liable for military service were circumcised thus leaving them incapacitated and unable to defend their city and thus we can see that the deception of Jacob’s sons was successful.

Genesis 34:25-29 presents to us the record of the murder of Shechem and his father Hamor as well as all the men of the city of Shechem by Jacob’s sons in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

Genesis 34:25

“Now it came about on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came upon the city unawares, and killed every male.”

“Simeon” was the second child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “the Lord has heard” according to Genesis 29:33.

“Levi” was the third child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “my husband will be attached to me” according to Genesis 29:34.

If you recall, Dinah was the seventh child that Leah bore to Jacob and only girl and her birth is recorded in Genesis 30:21 and her name means, “judgment.” Therefore, we can see that Simeon and Levi were Dinah’s “full” brothers and not “half” brothers and thus she in turn was their baby sister.

Undoubtedly, Simeon and Levi took their servants along with them to kill the inhabitants of Shechem since it would take more than just these two to kill all the men of the city. They waited three days to attack the city since after three days the pain from the circumcision would be at its worst.

“Killed” is the verb *haragh* (gr^h*) (haw-rag), which is used in a technical legal sense of murdering someone by violence.

The Word of God prohibits murder according to Exodus 20:13 and is one of the sins that God hates according to Proverbs 6:16-19 and according to Genesis 9:6 is to be punished through capital punishment.

“Unawares” is the noun *betach* (jf^B#) (beh-takh), which means that Simeon and Levi and their servants attacked the city of Shechem “unmolested” or in other words, they met “no resistance” due to the fact that all the men of the city were incapacitated because of the effects of being circumcised three days prior.

Genesis 34:26

“They killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went forth.”

The fact that Dinah was raped by Shechem and that Simeon and Levi took Dinah from Shechem’s

house indicates that Dinah was held against her will or in other words she was held hostage by Shechem even though he treated her well according to Genesis 34:3. Therefore, we can see that Shechem and his father Hamor had never offered honest negotiations with Simeon and Levi who felt that they were negotiating with a gun held to their heads.

The fact that Dinah was held hostage by Shechem indicates that Shechem and Hamor had attempted to impose their will on Jacob’s family in the preceding negotiations, thus, the Shechemites brought down this violence upon themselves. The fact that Dinah was held hostage by Shechem further indicates that Jacob’s sons were being made an offer by Shechem and Hamor that they couldn’t refuse.

Jacob’s sons did not have the option of declining Shechem and Hamor’s proposal of intermarriage with Dinah held captive against her will by Shechem. Therefore, they felt justified and that they had no recourse but to attack the Shechemites in order to rescue their sister.

Remember, Jacob’s sons were up against an entire city and therefore, felt justified in using deceit in the negotiations with Hamor and Shechem. Of course, they did have an option, which they did not use and which option was to go to the Lord in prayer and ask for His guidance. Therefore, the course of action they took against the Shechemites was not blind fury but part of a premeditated plan to rescue their sister.

First they attacked the men of the city, which was followed by the killing of Shechem and his father Hamor and then lastly, they freed their sister. Remember, that they not only had to deal with all possible resistance but also future retaliation.

Although Simeon and Levi were justified in their anger due to the fact that their sister Dinah was not only raped but also was held hostage by Shechem, they were “not” justified in murdering innocent people, namely, the men of the city of Shechem since they had nothing to do with the rape and kidnapping of Dinah. They were also not justified in killing Shechem and his father Hamor since the Lord never sanctioned such a thing.

Genesis 34:27

“Jacob's sons came upon the slain and looted the city, because they had defiled their sister.”

The causal clause “because they defiled their sister” expresses Simeon and Levi’s motive for killing the men of the city of Shechem and is not used by the narrator to justify their actions but to emphasize that the looting was not done for the love of money but to avenge the rape of their sister.

The fact that Simeon and Levi and their servants looted the city indicates that they considered the rape of their sister and her being held hostage by Shechem as acts of war requiring military action and the plundering of the city and the taking of prisoners of war.

The actions of Simeon and Levi were totally unnecessary unlike Abraham’s military action, which he took against the four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings to rescue his nephew Lot. Military action was necessary and appropriate by Abraham to rescue Lot since Lot who was a citizen of Sodom was taken as a prisoner of war by the Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings after they had defeated the Five Dead Sea Kings (See Genesis 14:1-16).

The military action taken by Simeon and Levi was totally unnecessary and inappropriate because Dinah was not a prisoner of war but rather the object of a man’s infatuation and love and affection (See Genesis 34:3, 19)!

Genesis 34:28-29

“They took their flocks and their herds and their donkeys, and that which was in the city and that which was in the field; and they captured and looted all their wealth and all their little ones and their wives, even all that was in the houses.”

The Lord would not have approved the plundering of Shechem, which was a Canaanite city and He would not have approved of the taking captive the women and children of the city since later on in Israel’s history, the Lord prohibited Israel from plundering the Canaanites but rather everything had to be killed or destroyed (See Deuteronomy 20:16-18).

Further indicating that Simeon and Levi were out of the will of God is the inconsistency of their actions where they took the wives of the men of the city of Shechem as hostages when God prohibited marriage to Canaanite women!

Simeon and Levi considered this plunder as the spoils of war but this was totally unnecessary and inappropriate since Dinah was not a prisoner of war but rather the object of a man’s infatuation and love and affection!

We complete our study of Genesis 34 by noting Genesis 34:30-31, which gives us the record of the reaction of Jacob and his sons to this event.

Genesis 34:30

“Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, ‘You have brought trouble on me by making me odious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and my men being few in number, they will gather together against me and attack me and I will be destroyed, I and my household.’”

Jacob’s reaction to the massacre of the men of the city of Shechem and the plundering of that city by his sons Simeon and Levi reveals that he is out of fellowship with God and again living according to his old Adamic sin nature. Notice that Jacob never condemns his sons for the massacre, nor for abusing the rite of circumcision or even for breach of contract! But rather, he simply fears the consequences of their actions, which would make him unpopular with the inhabitants of the land and could result in the death of himself and his household.

Jacob demonstrates no moral outrage or righteous indignation towards the actions of his sons just as he failed to show no moral outrage or righteous indignation for the rape of his own daughter Dinah. Not only this, but notice that he shows no concern whatsoever for his daughter Dinah who has gone through a harrowing experience of being raped, held hostage and seeing the massacre of innocent people!

Jacob cares more about himself and his own public relations rather than his sons’ actions or the well-being of his own daughter or how the massacre of Shechem misrepresented the holiness of God, which he and his family were to reflect. His fear of

retribution by the inhabitants of the area surrounding Shechem reveals that he fails to take into consideration the Lord's unconditional promise to protect him and his household.

The Lord had delivered him from Laban and Esau, when Jacob was in the right but now he could not see how he could expect divine protection when his family was obviously in the wrong.

Remember, Jacob had no idea that his sons were fixing to kill the Shechemites. In Genesis 49:5-7, Jacob under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit rebukes Simeon and Levi for their conduct in dealing with the rape of Dinah indicating that these two alone hatched the plan and that Jacob was totally unaware of their intentions and was thus innocent of murder.

Genesis 49:5-7

"Simeon and Levi are brothers; Their swords are implements of violence."

"Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen."

"Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

Therefore, the criticism of Jacob for failing to rebuke Simeon and Levi for their murderous plan is unwarranted since he never knew of their plan in the first place. However, the criticism of Jacob for remaining silent while his sons proposed circumcision as the condition for intermarriage with the inhabitants of Shechem who were a Canaanite people is warranted since intermarriage with the Canaanites was out of the question since they were under a curse according to Genesis 9:25.

Jacob failed as the leader of his family by remaining silent while his sons proposed circumcision as the condition for intermarriage with the Canaanites. He knew that this was wrong since his own father Isaac prohibited him from marrying a Canaanite woman like his brother Esau.

In fact, this was the reason why Isaac sent him to Paddan Aram to marry an Aramean woman, who were Shemites. Jacob should have taken control

and stopped the negotiations with Shechem and Hamor once he heard his sons propose circumcision as a condition for intermarriage with the inhabitants of Shechem since the Lord prohibited his family to intermarry with Canaanites.

He should have demanded that his daughter be returned to him and then immediately leave the area and return to Bethel to fulfill his vow to the Lord. Therefore, we see that the massacre of Shechem could have been avoided if Jacob functioned in his role as the patriarch of the family and had taken control from the beginning.

So we see that his criticism of his sons seemed to them as ridiculous and hypocrisy on his part since he was complaining about the action they had taken but what had "he" done? Had he forgotten that his daughter Dinah was raped by Shechem, a Canaanite who then had the audacity to hold her hostage while he negotiated a marriage agreement with Jacob's family? Where was Jacob when intermarriage with Canaanites was proposed to his family by Shechem and Hamor, which was against the will of the Lord?

Later on the Mosaic Law prohibited the Israelites from intermarrying with the Canaanites since the latter would take the former away from their relationship with God and lead them into idolatry, which would result in divine discipline upon the nation of Israel (See Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

Satan, who is the great enemy of the nation of Israel, is behind this proposal since acceptance of this proposal would have meant the absorption of the Israelites by the Canaanites and the loss of their identity, thus preventing the birth of Christ.

If Jacob had known a better way to solve the problem with Dinah and Shechem, then why didn't he speak up? Where was Israel, the man who prevailed with God and men by appropriating by faith the power of God in his life? Why didn't Jacob speak up when he knew his son's proposal of circumcision was wrong and that intermarriage with Canaanites was prohibited by God?

The statements made by Jacob as recorded in Genesis 34:30 reveal that he was a people pleaser at this point in the narrative rather than a God pleaser. He wanted to get along with his neighbors

even if it meant compromising his relationship with God and disobeying Him! So we can see that his sons thought that Jacob's criticism was total hypocrisy and unwarranted.

"By making me odious" is the verb *ba'ash* (VU^B*), which literally means, "to stink" but is used in Genesis 34:30 figuratively by Jacob to describe the massacre of Shechem by his sons as making him "abhorred" by the inhabitants of the area surrounding Shechem.

The "Canaanites" lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua and whose western border was the Mediterranean Sea (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51).

The "Perizzites" refers to a tribe of people who inhabited the mountainous region eventually taken over by the tribes of Ephraim and Judah (cf. Josh. 11:3; 17:5; Judg. 1:4f.) and because they were related to the Canaanites, the term "Perizzites" often refers to this entire group (cf. Gen. 13:7; 34:30).

According to Joshua 11:3 and 17:15, the "Perizzites" occupied the central hill country, which would be the region of Shechem.

Genesis 34:31

"But they said, 'Should he treat our sister as a harlot?'"

Notice that Jacob's sons use the phrase "our sister" and not "your daughter" revealing the tremendous rift that has taken place between Jacob and his sons.

The rhetorical question put forth by Jacob's sons to their father emphatically asserts the anticipated negative answer and condemns Jacob. However, Jacob's prophecy concerning Simeon and Levi recorded in Genesis 49:5-7 condemns Jacob's sons.

Jacob failed in his leadership role in his family by remaining silent when his boys proposed circumcision as the condition for intermarriage with the Canaanites since he did not give appropriate guidance and direction to his children. Simeon and Levi were justified in being angry for the rape of their sister and her being held hostage but were wrong in the actions they took to deal with the problem.

Genesis 35

Genesis 35 completes the eighth book in Genesis, which began in Genesis 25:19 and presents the family history of Isaac and in particular Jacob whose name was later changed by the Lord to "Israel" who would carry on the line of Christ and be the progenitor of the nation of Israel.

The following is an outline of Genesis 35: (1) Jacob fulfills his vow to God at Bethel (Genesis 35:1-15). (2) Death of Rachel and Birth of Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-20) (3) Reuben's Incest (Genesis 35:21-22a). (4) Jacob's Genealogy (Genesis 35:22b-26). (5) Death and Burial of Isaac at Hebron by Jacob and Esau (Genesis 35:27-29).

The following is an outline of the first section contained in Genesis 35:1-15: (1) God commands Jacob to ascend to Bethel and build an altar in fulfillment of his vow (Genesis 35:1). (2) Jacob obeys, purges his household of idols and builds altar (Genesis 35:2-7). (3) Death of Deborah (Genesis 32:8). (4) Preincarnate Christ appears to Jacob and renews Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 35:9-13). (5) Jacob rededicates the stone pillar and renews name of Bethel (Genesis 35:14-15).

We will begin by studying Genesis 35:1, which gives us the record of God commanding Jacob to go up to Bethel and fulfill his vow to make an altar to worship Him there.

Genesis 35:1

"Then God said to Jacob, 'Arise, go up to Bethel and live there, and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau.'"

Jacob has not heard from God in approximately ten years when He gave Jacob the command to leave Paddan Aram and return to Canaan (See Genesis 31:3), which is indicated first of all from the age of Dinah in Shechem as compared to her age at the time of Jacob's departure. When Jacob left Paddan-aram, she must have been a very young child, for Dinah was born after Leah had borne Jacob six sons (cf. 30:21) and by the time Jacob was in Shechem, Dinah was of a marriageable age (cf. 34:1ff.).

Secondly, we know that Joseph was seventeen when he was sold into slavery, and this seems to

be not too long after Jacob went to Bethel for the second time (37:2). Since we know that Joseph was born at the end of Jacob's fourteen year contract with Laban (30:25-26), he would have been about six years old when Jacob left Paddan-aram (cf. 31:41), thus, there is a period of nearly ten years between Jacob's departure from Paddan-aram and his final arrival at Bethel.

Notice that Moses does "not" use the covenant name of God *Yahweh*, "Lord" but rather he uses *Elohim*, "God," which emphasizes the sovereignty of God, which refers to God's complete power over all of creation, so that He exercises His will absolutely, without any necessary conditioning by a finite will or wills. Therefore, the noun *Elohim*, "God" emphasizes to the reader that God has sovereignly determined to intervene to protect Jacob and prevent the inhabitants surrounding Shechem to attack Jacob and his household, thus protecting the line of Christ by commanding him to return to Bethel.

Also, the noun *Elohim* emphasizes that Jacob is under God's authority, which is expressed by God commanding him to leave Shechem and return to Bethel.

Furthermore, the noun *Elohim*, "God" also emphasizes the omnipotence of God, which has protected Jacob from Laban, Esau and would now protect him from the Canaanites and Perizzites whom Jacob feared would seek to attack him in retaliation for the massacre of the Shechemites by his sons.

"Arise" is the verb *qum* (<WQ) (koom), which is an idiomatic expression describing a preparatory action needed to be taken so that a primary action can take place and involves preparation to change location as God commands Jacob to return to Bethel.

"Go up" is the verb *alah* (hl*u*), which indicates that God is commanding Jacob to "ascend" to Bethel since Shechem is approximately 1,880 feet above sea level and Bethel approximately 2,890 feet above sea level.

God's command to Jacob is a double entendre symbolizing Jacob's spiritual ascent to God since he has been in a spiritual trough ever since arriving in Shechem where he procrastinated and

made a poor decision by purchasing land from Hamor, which led to the rape of his daughter Dinah and the massacre of the city of Shechem.

"Bethel" literally means, "house of God" and was approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem, which according to Genesis 28:19, was originally called "Luz," until Jacob changed the name to memorialize his encounter with the preincarnate Christ.

Bethel was only thirty miles away from Shechem, and yet it was ten years since Jacob's return into Canaan and it was over thirty years since he had made his vow to return to Bethel and build an altar there to worship the Lord.

"Live" is the verb *yashav* (bv^y*) (yaw-shav), which means, "to live in a place for a period of time" and does "not" mean to live in a place permanently. Therefore, God wanted Jacob to live in Bethel long enough to fulfill his vow and build the altar he promised to build thirty years prior.

If you recall, in Genesis 28:10-21, Jacob never built an altar to the Lord since he did not have any materials to do so, nor animals to sacrifice but promised to return to Bethel and do so when God returned him to the land of Canaan.

"Altar" is the noun *mizbeach* (j^B@w+m!) (miz-bay-akh), which was composed of material, constructed of earth and stones and was the place Jacob and his family was to worship the Lord.

This is the first time that God commanded one of the patriarchs to build an altar. God reminds Jacob that approximately thirty years before that He had appeared to him at Bethel while he was fleeing from Esau and promised to protect and prosper Jacob and return him to the land of Canaan.

In Genesis 28:10-13, as Jacob was departing Beersheba to escape the wrath of Esau, it was at Bethel that he was given a vision of elect angels and the Lord appeared to him in a dream in order to give him reassurance as he made his way into exile in Paddan Aram.

In Genesis 28:13-15, we saw Jacob receiving from the Lord reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and reassurance that the Lord would protect and prosper him in exile in Paddan Aram.

In Genesis 28:16-22, we saw Jacob perform five acts of worship in response to this revelation from God.

Genesis 28:10-17

“Then Jacob departed from Beersheba and went toward Haran.”

“He came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place.”

“He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.”

“And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, ‘I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants.’”

“Your descendants will also be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”

“Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.”

“Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, ‘Surely the LORD is in this place, and I did not know it.’”

“He was afraid and said, ‘How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.’”

The Hebrew term translated “fear” and “awesome” is the verb *yare* (ar@y*) (yaw-ray), which denotes the concept of worshipping God and does “not” refer to being afraid as a result of a threat to one’s life but rather it means, “to have reverence and respect” for the Lord and to be in “awe” of Him and expresses Jacob’s “wonder” towards Him.

Genesis 28:18, “So Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put

under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on its top.”

“Pillar” is the noun *matstsevah* (hb*x@m^) (mats-say-vaw), which denotes a single upright stone pillar set up as a monument and a memorial to mark the spot where the Lord had appeared to him and made promises to him.

The pouring of oil on top of the limestone was an expression of Jacob’s dedication, devotion, consecration and gratitude to the Lord and recognition of the gracious promises that the Lord made to him in the dream.

Genesis 28:19-21

“He called the name of that place Bethel; however, previously the name of the city had been Luz.”

“Then Jacob made a vow, saying, ‘If God will be with me and will keep me on this journey that I take, and will give me food to eat and garments to wear, and I return to my father’s house in safety, then the LORD will be my God.’”

Vows were not contracts or limited agreements but rather they were verbal and voluntary acts of submission to the Lord and the reorientation of one’s life to meet the Lord’s standards.

Remember, he left home because of Esau’s desire to kill him but now Jacob’s journey takes on a whole new different meaning since God has revealed to him that He has a plan for his life. Since the Lord has revealed Himself to Jacob through the theophany and guaranteed him divine protection and prosperity while in exile in Paddan Aram, Jacob has committed himself to living according to the standards of the living God.

“If” is the conditional particle *im* (sa!) (eem), which introduces the protasis of a 1st class condition, which indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument.

The context indicates that Jacob is not striking a bargain with the Lord since he has already responded to the divine revelation by worshipping the Lord with his lips, erecting a memorial, pouring oil on the top of the pillar expressing his dedication and devotion to the Lord and naming

the place “house of God.” Therefore, the conditional particle should be translated either “since” you will be with me and will protect me on this journey that I take and will give me food to eat and garments to wear and I return to my father’s house in safety, and I believe you that I will, then, the Lord will be my God.

Genesis 28:22, “This stone, which I have set up as a pillar, will be God’s house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You.”

Jacob proposes to give this tithe to the Lord because he now recognizes the Lord’s authority over him and does this willingly rather than from obligation.

Also, this tithe that Jacob proposes to give the Lord would provide the means to build and maintain the altar he would build, which the pillar began. Therefore, in Genesis 35:1, God commands Jacob to return to Bethel to finish what he began with the pillar and build an altar as he promised God some thirty years before when he was fleeing Canaan because of Esau’s threat to kill him once their father Isaac had died.

God has kept His promise to not only to protect and prosper Jacob while he was in exile in Paddan Aram with his uncle Laban but also He fulfilled His promise to bring him back to the land of Canaan safe and sound. Now it was time for Jacob to keep his end of the bargain. God was rebuking Jacob by reminding Jacob of his vow and commanding him to return to Bethel to fulfill it and build an altar there to worship Him.

The content of the divine command informs us as to what Jacob had promised to do when God returned him to the land of Canaan, namely, to build an altar there in order to worship the Lord.

Numbers 30:2, “If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”

Ecclesiastes 5:4-5, “When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.”

Obedience to this command would take great faith on the part of Jacob since the Canaanites and Perizzites would have been hostile due to the massacre by his people of the city of Shechem.

In Genesis 35:2-7, we have the account of Jacob obeying God’s command to return to Bethel and build an altar to Him there in fulfillment of the vow he made to God thirty years before. Also, Genesis 35:8 records the death of Deborah who was Rebekah’s nurse.

Genesis 35:2-3

“So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, ‘Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves and change your garments and let us arise and go up to Bethel, and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone.’”

In preparation for his trip to Bethel, Jacob exercises his patriarchal and spiritual authority over his household by purging it of idolatry, which led to the massacre of the city of Shechem by Jacob’s sons.

“Put away” is the 2nd person masculine plural hiphil imperative form of the verb *sur* (rWS) (soor), which means, “to remove” the foreign gods that were being used by the members of Jacob’s household.

“The foreign gods” are a reference to the *ṯraphim*, “household idols,” which were small idols like figurines and were considered the family gods, which gave the family protection and were kept on a god-shelf and were outlawed in Israel (See 1 Samuel 15:23; 19:13; 2 Kings 23:24; Zechariah 10:2f.).

These gods were usually small figurines (two to three inches long), sometimes carried on the body as charms, many of which archaeologists have discovered. These “foreign gods” were acquired as part of the spoils of Shechem and were undoubtedly used by the women of Shechem.

Also, they were used by the members of Jacob’s own household as indicated by the masculine plural form of the verb *sur*, which means “all of you remove” the foreign gods indicating that the

command is directed towards Jacob's own household. It appears that the bad decision by Jacob to settle at Shechem not only resulted in the rape of his daughter Dinah and the massacre of the city of Shechem by his sons but it also appears to have exposed Jacob's own sons to the idols of the Shechemites.

The fact that Jacob's sons were influenced by the idolatrous practices of the Shechemites helps us to understand the reason why later on Israel's history the Lord commanded the Israelites to exterminate the Hittites, the Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites since these nations would be a bad influence on them, leading them away from the worship of the Lord.

Deuteronomy 20:17, 18, "But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the LORD your God."

Idols open the door for demonic activity and the massacre carried out by Simeon and Levi would show the presence of demons. This does not excuse the behavior of the boys, but it makes it more plausible.

Deuteronomy 32:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:20 teach that the worship of idols is connected to the worship of demons since the sacrificing to idols is in reality sacrificing to demons who promote the worship of idols.

Deuteronomy 32:17, "They sacrificed to demons who were not God, to gods whom they have not known, new gods who came lately, whom your fathers did not dread."

1 Corinthians 10:20, "No, but I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers in demons."

Therefore, it appears that Jacob's sons and in particular Simeon and Levi were demonically influenced, which resulted in their brutally killing

all the men of the city of Shechem as well as Hamor and his son Shechem.

Again, this does "not" excuse their actions since they chose to be involved in the worship of idols, which opened them to demonic influence.

Demonic "influence" has to do with demons influencing the human soul whereas demon "possession" has to do with demons indwelling the human body. The latter of which can only take place in an unbeliever since demons will never indwell the body of a believer since the believer's body is permanently indwelt by all three members of the Trinity (See Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:11). Simeon and Levi were demonically "influenced" and not "possessed" since they were believers.

Idolatry is the worship of something created as opposed to the worship of the Creator Himself. Scores of references to idolatry appear in the Old Testament.

Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before Me."

Exodus 20:23, "You shall not make other gods besides Me; gods of silver or gods of gold, you shall not make for yourselves."

Joshua 24:2 states that Abraham's father served idols.

Joshua 24:2, "Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, namely, Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, and they served other gods.'"

The most noteworthy instance of idolatry in the history of Israel was Aaron's making of the golden calf at the foot of Mount Sinai (Ex 32:1-4).

Idolatry originally meant the worship of idols, or the worship of false gods by means of idols, but came to mean among the Old Testament Hebrews any worship of false gods, whether by images or otherwise or the worship of the Lord through visible symbols (Hos 8:5-6; 10:5).

Hosea 8:5-6, "He has rejected your calf, O Samaria, saying, 'My anger burns against them!' How long will they be incapable of innocence? For from Israel is even this! A

craftsman made it, so it is not God; Surely the calf of Samaria will be broken to pieces.”

Hosea 10:5, “The inhabitants of Samaria will fear for the calf of Beth-aven. Indeed, its people will mourn for it, and its idolatrous priests will cry out over it, over its glory, since it has departed from it.”

Idolatry is not only the giving to any creature or human creation the honor or devotion, which belongs to God alone, but also is putting anything ahead of your relationship with God and which would prevent you from doing His will (1 Cor 10:14; Gal 5:20; Col 3:5; 1 Peter 4:3).

Ultimately in the New Testament idolatry came to mean, not only the giving to any creature or human creation the honor or devotion which belonged to God alone, but the giving to any human desire a precedence over God's will (1 Cor 10:14; Gal 5:20; Col 3:5; 1 Peter 4:3).

1 Corinthians 10:14, “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.”

1 John 5:21, “Little children, guard yourselves from idols.”

Galatians 5:19-20, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions.”

Colossians 3:5, “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”

1 Peter 4:3, “For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.”

The command “remove the foreign gods, which are among you” means that Jacob’s household must not only get back in fellowship with the Lord, which was lost due to the practice of idolatry but they are to be dedicated and devoted to the Lord by being obedient to Him (See Joshua 24:14, 23; Judges 10:16; 1 Samuel 7:3-4; 2 Chronicles 33:15).

The command to “purify yourselves” involves the confession of the sin of idolatry to the Father as well as experiential sanctification, which is accomplished by obedience to the Word of God.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

2 Thessalonians 2:13, “But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.”

Without the confession of sin and subsequent obedience to God’s Word, sanctification can “not” be experienced by the believer. “Sanctification” is a technical theological term for the believer who has been “set apart” through the Baptism of the Spirit at the moment of salvation “in order to serve God exclusively” and describes the process of producing the holiness of God in the believer.

In Old Testament Israel and with the patriarchs there were purification rituals, which symbolized the confession of sin and obedience to God and included the bathing of the body, washing clothes and abstaining from sexual intercourse (See Leviticus 14:8-9; 22:6-7; Numbers 8:7). These purification rituals symbolized the rejection of idolatry and serving God exclusively (See Deuteronomy 7:25-26; Jeremiah 2:23; 7:30).

The command “change your garments” symbolized the change of state by the soul of the believer from a life of disobedience to obedience as well as a life dedicated and devoted to God by means of the rejection of idolatry and obedience to His Word.

Ephesians 4:22-24, “that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”

The command “let arise and go up to Bethel and I will make an altar there to God” expresses Jacob’s desire and intention to obey God’s command recorded in Genesis 35:1 and fulfill his vow to build an altar there to worship the Lord.

“God” is not the usual *Elohim* but rather the singular form of the noun, which is *El* (la@) in order to express a contrast between the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who is the one and only true God and the foreign gods of the Canaanites.

Obedience to God’s command to return to Bethel would take great courage on the part of Jacob and his family since they would be traveling through potentially hostile territory as a result of the massacre of Shechem by Jacob’s sons.

“The day of my distress” is a reference to the day Jacob left his father and mother thirty years before as a result of Esau threatening to kill him because he deceived their father into bestowing the blessing of the birthright upon him rather than Esau.

“God who...has been with me wherever I have gone” is an acknowledgement by Jacob that God has been faithful to him by fulfilling His promise that He made to him at Bethel thirty years before to be with him, which is recorded in Genesis 28:15.

Genesis 35:4

“So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods which they had and the rings which were in their ears, and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem.”

Jacob’s family and those outside of his immediately family respond to the exercise of his patriarchal and spiritual authority by handing over their foreign gods to him to dispose of them. The earrings were given to Jacob because they too were connected with the idolatrous practice of worshipping idols.

“Hid” is the verb *taman* (/m^f*), which means, “to hide an object so that it cannot be found,” thus Jacob hid these *t’raphim* and earrings so that they could not be found so as to be used again by the Israelites.

“The oak that was near Shechem” is a reference to “the oak of Moreh” in Shechem where the Lord

first appeared to Abraham when he arrived from Haran and was a well-known pagan site of worship in the days of the patriarchs (See Genesis 12:6-9).

Genesis 35:5

“As they journeyed, there was a great terror upon the cities which were around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob.”

“Great terror” is mistranslated and should be translated “the terror of God” since the Hebrew text contains the noun *chittah* (hT*!) (khit-taw), “terror” and the noun *Elohim* (<yh!+Oa\$), “God.” Therefore, the terror experienced by the inhabitants that surrounded Jacob’s family was a terror produced by God and prevented the surrounding cities from attacking Jacob’s family.

The fact that God had to intervene to protect Jacob’s family indicates quite clearly that the cities surrounding Shechem wanted to destroy Jacob’s family when they heard that Shechem had been massacred by Jacob’s sons.

The fact that Jacob’s family was influenced by the kingdom of darkness by being exposed to the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites and that God had to intervene to protect Jacob’s family from the cities surrounding Shechem indicates that Satan was seeking to destroy Jacob’s family.

Satan was seeking to destroy Jacob’s family since they were the progenitors of the nation of Israel, from which Christ would come who would destroy the works of the devil and would fulfill the Abrahamic and Palestinian covenants and would rule for a thousand years in Jerusalem with Israel as head of the nations.

Genesis 35:6

“So Jacob came to Luz (that is, Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him.”

Genesis 35:6 records Jacob obeying God’s command and arriving back in Bethel, which was only thirty miles away from Shechem. The fact that God had induced a panic upon the cities surrounding Shechem and that Jacob had arrived with his entire family safely in the land of Canaan and back in Bethel was fulfillment of the Lord’s promises to Jacob at Bethel thirty years before to

be with him and bring him back to Canaan (See Genesis 28:15-21).

Genesis 35:7

“He built an altar there, and called the place El-bethel, because there God had revealed Himself to him when he fled from his brother.”

The statement “he (Jacob) built an altar there (at Bethel)” reveals that Jacob fulfilled his vow to build an altar at Bethel to worship the Lord when the Lord brought him back to Canaan (See Genesis 28:22).

“God’s house” is a reference to both the altar and the place the Lord appeared to Jacob when he fled thirty years before from his brother Esau.

The altar memorializes that God revealed Himself to Jacob at Bethel when he was fleeing his brother Esau thirty years before, which is expressed by the name “El-bethel.”

Genesis 35:8

“Now Deborah, Rebekah’s nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the oak; it was named Allon-bacuth.”

Deborah’s name means, “honeybee” and she is described as Rebekah’s nurse. The fact that Deborah’s name is mentioned indicates how highly regarded she was not only by the family of Jacob but also by God the Holy Spirit who inspired Moses to memorialize her death. That she was highly regarded and revered by Jacob’s family is indicated by naming the oak tree, which they buried her under as “Allon-bacuth,” which means, “the oak of weeping.”

The fact that Deborah’s death is recorded and not Rebekah’s is a rebuke of Rebekah indicating God’s displeasure with her ordering Jacob to deceive her blind husband Isaac into bestowing the blessing of the birthright upon Jacob rather than Esau.

Jacob had known Deborah is entire life. She had come with Rebekah from Paddan Aram when Rebekah left to marry Isaac (See Genesis 24:59) and she took care of Jacob like a nanny.

Of course, she did not go with Jacob when he fled Esau. The fact that Deborah is recorded in Genesis 35:8 as being a member of Jacob’s household

clearly indicates that Jacob visited his father while he was living in Shechem and demonstrates proof that Rebekah was dead at this time. More than likely, when Jacob returned to visit his father at Hebron and found that his mother was dead, and that Deborah was not really needed, he urged Deborah to join his household to serve as a “senior advisor” to his servants as well as a surrogate grandmother to his children.

In Genesis 35:9-13, we see the preincarnate Christ appearing to Jacob and reconfirming the change of his name to “Israel” and reconfirming the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Genesis 35:9

“Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him.”

The statement “God appeared to Jacob” is a “theophany,” which is a technical theological term used to refer to a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). This is the fifth time that the preincarnate Christ communicated with Jacob either audibly or both visibly and audibly (Genesis 28:10-22; 31:10-13; 32:24-32; 35:1). Therefore, after Jacob obeyed the Lord’s command to return to Bethel and fulfill his vow to build an altar to worship the Lord, the Lord once again communicated with Jacob by manifesting Himself both visibly and audibly. He did so in order to reconfirm that He had changed Jacob’s name to Israel and also to reconfirm or reiterate that Jacob was inheriting the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant and carrying on the line of the Messiah.

Evidently, the Lord had to reiterate and reconfirm to Jacob that He indeed had changed his name to Israel so as to reassure Jacob that He had a plan for Jacob’s life even though Jacob had failed in his responsibility as the spiritual leader in his family at Shechem. Jacob had not acted in a manner consistent with his new name “Israel” and so the Lord sought to reassure Jacob that He had not given up on him.

This theophany and the reconfirmation and a reaffirmation that Jacob would inherit the blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant was to

reassure Jacob that the Lord had not forsaken him because of his failure at Shechem. Though Jacob had been unfaithful at Shechem and had delayed ten years before returning to Bethel and fulfilling his vow to the Lord to build an altar to worship Him there, God had remained faithful to Jacob and would continue to do so.

2 Timothy 2:13, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”

The mention of Jacob’s return “from Paddan Aram” is to draw the reader’s attention to the fact that the Lord fulfilled His promise to Jacob to bring him back to the land of Canaan and which promise is recorded in Genesis 28:15.

The fact that the Lord fulfilled His promise to Jacob to bring him back safe and sound to his homeland demonstrates the faithfulness of God.

Psalms 33:4, “For the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness.”

“Blessed” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.”

Jacob would be “blessed” or in other words, “endued with power for success, prosperity, fecundity and longevity” by means of the Word of God since the Word of God is “alive and powerful” according to Hebrews 4:12.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

God would bless Jacob through six promises, which are contained in Genesis 35:10-12. Therefore, the statement “He (God) blessed him (Jacob)” means that Jacob would be the recipient and beneficiary of the omnipotence of God, which would be manifested in time by the Lord fulfilling six promises through Jacob and his descendants (spiritual and biological), which are recorded in Genesis 35:10-12.

These six promises that are recorded in Genesis 35:10-12 echo the promises the Lord made to Jacob at Bethel, which are recorded in Genesis

28:13-14 and echo the promises given to his father Isaac, which are recorded in Genesis 26:4. They also echo the blessing that his father Isaac pronounced upon him before he left home, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3-4.

The Lord’s promises to both Jacob and Isaac and the blessing of his father bestowed upon him before he left home were a “reconfirmation” of the promises made to Abraham that are recorded in Genesis 12:2-3, 7, 13:14-18, 15:1-6, 18, 17:1-8 and 22:17.

In Genesis 26:3-4, Isaac received reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant by means of a theophany. In Genesis 26:23-25, the Lord appeared in a theophany to Isaac at Beersheba and gave him reassurance by reconfirming to him the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant. In Genesis 28:3-4, the blessing that Isaac bestowed upon Jacob before he left home echoes the promises of the Abrahamic covenant. In Genesis 28:14-15, God’s reiteration of the promises to Abraham and Isaac assures Jacob of God’s faithfulness.

Genesis 35:10

“God said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. Thus He called him Israel.’”

The statement “You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name” echoes the Lord’s statement to Jacob at Peniel after wrestling with Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 32:28.

After Jacob wrestled with the Lord at Peniel, the Lord changed Jacob’s name to “Israel” and here the Lord reiterates and reconfirms and reaffirms to Jacob that this is still the case.

The name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

“Israel” is the proper noun *yisra’el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed.

Therefore, the promise “You shall no longer be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name” is not only a promise but a reaffirmation to Jacob that would impress upon him the need to live his life in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name.

He would live his life in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name by appropriating by faith in prayer the promises that God had given to him just as he did prior to being reunited with Esau (See Genesis 32).

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His first promise to Jacob and empower him to live in a manner consistent with the meaning of his new name *yisra'el* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) (yis-raw-ale), “Israel,” which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” (See Genesis 35:10).

The bestowal of the name “Israel” upon Jacob constituted the essence of the blessing that he requested from the Lord recorded in Genesis 32:26.

The name *yisra'el*, “Israel” memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The name “Israel” represents the character of his new divine nature whereas the name “Jacob” represents the character of his old Adamic sin nature, which will be permanently eradicated at his physical death. Therefore, the emphasis of the name change to “Israel” implies that Jacob would experience the fulfillment of these six promises during the millennial reign of Christ when he will live permanently in his new nature that God gave him, which is signified by the name “Israel.”

Genesis 35:11

“God also said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.’”

The title *El Shaddai*, “God Almighty” emphasizes the omnipotence of God and describes the Lord as being able to bring to pass that which He has promised to Jacob.

Romans 4:20-21, “yet, with respect to the promise of God, he (Abraham) did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.”

The expression “God Almighty” (Hebrew: *El Shaddai*) was first used by God of Himself when speaking to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 17:1 and was used by Isaac when blessing Jacob as recorded in Genesis 28:3. Therefore, the title *El Shaddai*, “God Almighty” signifies that the six promises contained in Genesis 35:10-12 echo Isaac’s prophecy about Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3-5 and also recalls the covenant with Abraham recorded in Genesis 17:1-8.

The Lord’s promise to Jacob that he would “be fruitful and multiply” echoes the prophecy of Isaac concerning Jacob, which is recorded in Genesis 28:3 and means that the Lord would give Jacob the capacity to be prolific in that he would be the progenitor of a multitude of children in both a biological and spiritual sense. This promise means that the Lord would endue Jacob and his descendants with the ability to be prolific in terms of posterity.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His second promise to Jacob that he would “be fruitful and multiply” and endue him with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity (See Genesis 35:11).

The promise “a nation...shall come from you” in a “near” sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His third promise to Jacob that he would be the progenitor of “a nation,” and endue Jacob with power to be the progenitor of the nation of Israel (See Genesis 35:11).

The promise “a company of nations...shall come from you” was fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled in a “spiritual” sense through those individuals who exercised faith alone in Christ alone (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28).

The expression “a company of nations...shall come from you” refers to a community of nations that will originate from Jacob and echoes the

Lord's promise to his grandfather Abraham that he would become "the father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:4-5) and "the father of nations" (Genesis 17:6).

The Lord's promise to Abraham to make him "the father of a multitude of nations" and Isaac's desire that the Lord would make Jacob a "company of peoples" and the Lord's promise to Jacob that "a company of nations...shall come from you" would be fulfilled in both a "biological" and "spiritual" sense.

In a "biological" or "racial" sense, the "company of nations" that would originate from Jacob would be the nation of Israel. In a "spiritual" sense the "company of nations" that would originate from Jacob be all those who exercise faith alone in Christ alone who would be composed of all nations and races, both male and female, slave and freeman (John 3:1-7; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:26-28). This is how the Lord's promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:3 that in him "all the families of the earth would be blessed" would be accomplished.

In the same way, that Abraham became a father in a "spiritual" sense to those individuals who exercised faith in Christ so also Jacob would become the father in a "spiritual" sense to all those who exercised faith in Christ.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His fourth promise to Jacob and endue him with power to be the progenitor of "a company of nations" in a "spiritual" sense through all those who exercise faith alone in Christ alone.

The promise that "kings shall come forth from you" echoes the Lord's promise to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 17:6, 16 and is a reference to primarily to the kings of Israel (Gen. 35:11; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8-16) and the Lord Jesus Christ. Since the promise that "kings shall come forth from you" is a reference to the Kings of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ, it is therefore related to the "Davidic" Covenant, which like the "Abrahamic" Covenant, was an unconditional covenant meaning its fulfillment was totally dependent upon God's faithfulness.

The "Davidic" covenant deals with the dynasty that will rule the nation of Israel as indicated in 2

Samuel 7:16 where God promised David that a descendant of his would sit on his throne forever.

2 Samuel 7:16, "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever."

The "Davidic" covenant is reconfirmed throughout the Old Testament (Isa. 9:6-7; Jer. 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:14-17, 20-21; Ezek. 37:24-25; Dan. 7:13-14; Hos. 3:4-5; Amos 9:11; Zech. 14:4, 9).

Psalms 89:34-37, "My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful. Selah."

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of David, will literally fulfill this covenant during His millennial reign.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His fifth promise to Jacob and endue him with power to be the progenitor of the kings of Israel and the greatest King of them all, the Lord Jesus Christ (See Genesis 35:11).

Genesis 35:12

"The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you."

The promise of "land" is a reference to the "Palestinian Covenant," which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original "Abrahamic" covenant and amplified the land features of the "Abrahamic" covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The "Palestinian" Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan since the boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18).

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham's descendants and this promise was

fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

“Your descendants” refers to Jacob’s “biological” descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his “spiritual” descendants, which would be anyone, Jew or Gentile who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

In a “near” sense “Your descendants” refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His sixth and final promise to Jacob and endue him and his descendants (spiritual and biological) with power to possess the land of Canaan (See Genesis 35:12).

Though Jacob was still a resident alien in the land of Canaan, it was really his according to God’s promise and would be possessed by him and his descendants through faith in Christ during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 35:13

“Then God went up from him in the place where He had spoken with him.”

The fact that God ascended from Jacob at Bethel where He had spoken to Jacob indicates that this revelation was not in the form of a dream or vision but an actual face to face visit from the preincarnate Christ.

In Genesis 35:14-15, Jacob responds to the theophany and divine promises by constructing a limestone pillar and renewing the name of Bethel.

Genesis 35:14

“Jacob set up a pillar in the place where He had spoken with him, a pillar of stone, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it.”

Genesis 35:15

“So Jacob named the place where God had spoken with him, Bethel.”

Genesis 35:14-15 records Jacob responding to the theophany and reaffirmation from the Lord regarding his new name “Israel” and the reconfirmation of the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant just as he responded the first time the Lord appeared to him thirty years prior when he was leaving Canaan to see Laban.

Genesis 28:16-22 records a five-fold response from Jacob whereas Genesis 35:14-15 records a four-fold response.

In both instances, Jacob responds to the theophany and divine promises by erecting a stone pillar, pouring oil on the pillar and naming the place of the divine revelation Bethel.

The first time the Lord appeared to Jacob at Bethel, Jacob spoke and made a vow whereas the second time he does neither.

Genesis 35:7 records Jacob fulfilling this vow by building an altar, which he never did the first time since he had no animals with him to sacrifice whereas the second time the Lord has prospered him with large flocks.

The second time the Lord appeared to Jacob at Bethel, Jacob pours a drink offering on the stone pillar, which he never did the first time.

Jacob’s five-fold response to the first time the Lord appeared to him at Bethel and his four-fold response the second time were acts of worship in that he had “reverence” and “respect” for God and was in “awe” of Him and expressed his “wonder” towards Him.

Psalm 68:35, “O God, You are awesome from Your sanctuary. The God of Israel Himself gives strength and power to the people. Blessed be God!”

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures and is also the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Psalm 95:6-7, “Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”

“Pillar” is the noun *matstsevah* (hb*x@m^) (mats-say-vaw), which denotes a single upright stone pillar set up as a monument and a memorial to mark the spot where the Lord had appeared to him and made promises to him.

Jacob erects a stone pillar as a monument to mark the spot where the preincarnate Christ had appeared to him and made promises to him just as he did thirty years before when he left Canaan to go into exile in Paddan Aram with Laban (See Genesis 28:10-22). However, the first stone pillar did “not” accompany an altar, which Jacob builds a second time in obedience to the Lord’s command recorded in Genesis 35:7.

Also, Jacob never poured a drink offering on the first stone pillar but he does so when he constructs the second pillar. Jacob did not build an altar the first time since he had no animals with him to sacrifice and only had his staff with him when he made the trip to Paddan Aram according to Genesis 32:10.

The fact that Jacob constructs this pillar implies that this is “not” a rededication of the first one he built thirty years before since if the first one was still standing there would be no need to construct another one.

This is the third and final time that we see Jacob erecting a pillar to memorialize an event. We have noted already the first and third pillars and the second pillar was erected by Jacob according to Genesis 31:45 as a witness to the oral contract between him and his uncle Laban and called it “Galeed,” which is the Hebrew term for “witness heap.”

“Drink offering” is the noun *nesekh* (Es#n@) (neh-sek), which is derived from the verb *nasakh* (Es^n*) (naw-sak), which also appears in Genesis 35:15 and is translated “poured out.”

Genesis 35:14 records for the first time in the Bible someone employing a “drink offering” to worship God.

Notice that the “drink offering” is poured on the limestone pillar rather than the altar since the altar has to do with the sacrifice of Christ whereas the pillar dealt with Jacob’s dedication and devotion to the Lord.

The “drink offering” was originally established in Israel as an appropriate form of worship (Exodus 29:40-41; Leviticus 23:13; Numbers 28). Although Jacob is the first person recorded in the Bible to present a “drink offering” to the Lord, it was not until after the Exodus from Egypt that the laws governing the “drink offering” were established.

The “drink offering” is not mentioned in the five Great Levitical offerings since the sole emphasis of these offerings is upon the Person and Work of Christ.

The procedure for the “drink offering” is simply outlined in Numbers 28. The liquid normally employed for a “drink offering” was wine (*yayin*, Ex. 29:40; Nm. 15:5, 7, 10), or other fermented drink (*shekar* Nm. 28:7) and on at least one occasion water was “poured out to the Lord” (2 Sm. 23:16; 1 Chr. 11:18).

The “drink offering” was not to be consumed by the priest but rather was to be offered to the Lord. The “drink offering” presented by Jacob, and prescribed by the Lord through Moses for the children of Israel in Numbers and Leviticus emphasized the believer’s dedication to the Lord since it was not to be consumed by the priest, but rather offered totally and completely to the Lord as a sweet aroma.

The fact that the “drink offering” was not to be consumed by the priest but rather was to be offered to the Lord emphasizes the believer’s giving of himself completely to God in order to fulfill His will.

The fact that the “drink offering” was not to be consumed by the priest but rather was to be offered to the Lord implies that the believer must deny self, sacrifice self in order to fulfill God’s will.

You find yourself only by losing yourself in His will.

Luke 22:42, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

Luke 9:23-24, "And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.'"

John 12:24-26

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

"He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal."

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself to the Father as a sacrifice, and because of giving Himself to the Father, He also gave to us and so it is to be with us.

Ephesians 5:2, "and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma."

It is in giving ourselves wholly to the Lord that we best give ourselves to others since we are not called to serve mankind but rather we are called to pour out our lives as a drink offering to the Lord, and in that sacrifice to Him, our service to mankind will come forth.

2 Timothy 4:6-8

"For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come."

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

"in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing."

When he speaks of having fought a good fight and having kept the faith, he is actually saying, "I've been poured out to my Lord!" Paul, the apostle of sacrifice and self-denial, stood before his Lord in the closing days of his ministry as an empty vessel.

2 Corinthians 12:15, "I will most gladly spend and be expended for your souls."

Paul had given up the world in order to concentrate on doing God's will.

Galatians 6:14, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Believers rob God of His "drink offering" by living for self and loving the cosmic system of Satan rather than pouring out their lives to Him.

1 John 2:15, "Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

Just as he did after his first encounter with the Lord, Jacob pours oil on top of the limestone pillar, which was an expression of his dedication, devotion, consecration and gratitude to the Lord and recognition of the gracious promises that the Lord made to him (See Genesis 28:18; Exodus 30:25-29; Leviticus 8:10-12).

The "oil" poured on the limestone pillar by Jacob represents the Holy Spirit because of oil's power to sustain and fortify with energy. Therefore, the anointing oil of the Old Testament was a symbol of being empowered by the Spirit of God for the duties of the office to which a person was consecrated (Lev 8:12; 1 Sam 10:1,6; 16:13-14; Isa 61:1).

Therefore, "oil" poured on the limestone pillar by Jacob represents the Holy Spirit who would empower Jacob and his descendants to fulfill the six promises that the Lord made to Jacob that are recorded in Genesis 35:9-13.

1 John 2:27, "As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him."

“Anointing” is the noun *chrisma* and is a synonym for the indwelling of the Spirit who provides the believer the spiritual capacity or power to understand the Word of God and apply it for the purpose of producing in the believer Christ-like character.

“Bethel” literally means, “house of God” and is approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem and only thirty miles away from Shechem and according to Genesis 28:19, it was originally called “Luz,” until Jacob changed the name to memorialize his encounter with the preincarnate Christ.

If you recall, the first time that the Lord appeared to Jacob, he names the place “Bethel,” and as we see he does it again after encountering the Lord the second time, which seems redundant on Jacob’s part. However, Jacob was alone in his first encounter with the Lord but he has his family with him and many servants and the Shechemite women and children the second time around. Therefore, those who were believers were sharing in Jacob’s worship of the Lord and for those who were unbelievers in his entourage, namely, the Shechemite women, Jacob’s worship of the Lord would be as a witnessed to them.

Next, we will study the birth of Benjamin and the death of Rachel, which is recorded in Genesis 35:16-20. According to Genesis 35:27, Jacob leaves Bethel in order to see his father at Mamre of Kiriath-arba, which is Hebron. During this journey from Bethel to Hebron, Jacob’s favorite wife Rachel dies giving birth to his twelfth son Benjamin and also his oldest son Reuben commits incest with his concubine Bilhah. Therefore, we see Jacob going from spiritual elation and euphoria at Bethel to heartache and sadness due to the death of Rachel but then joy due to the birth of Benjamin and back again to heartache and sadness due to his oldest son Reuben having sex with his concubine Bilhah.

Genesis 35:16

“Then they journeyed from Bethel; and when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor.”

“They” refers to Jacob and his household as well as those women and children that were taken captive at Shechem.

“Journeyed” is the verb *nasa`* (US^N*) (naw-saw), which means, “to pull up” stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for “breaking camp.”

“Bethel” literally means, “house of God” and is approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem.

Jacob did “not” disobey God by leaving Bethel since in Genesis 35:1, God commanded Jacob to live at Bethel for a period of time long enough to fulfill his vow, which is indicated by the meaning of the verb *yashav*, “live,” which appears in Genesis 35:1 and does “not” mean to live in a place permanently.

Since Jacob has fulfilled his vow, we see that he leaves Bethel for two reasons: (1) In order to seek grass for his flocks, which was not in abundance at Bethel whose terrain, is limestone. (2) In order to see his father “Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba that is Hebron.” (See Genesis 35:27).

“Ephrath” is the proper noun *`ephrathah* (ht*r*p+a#) (ef-raw-thaw), which means, “fruitful region,” which according to Genesis 35:19 is the older name of “Bethlehem.”

Genesis 35:16 records that “when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath (Bethlehem), Rachel began to give birth and she suffered severe labor.”

This statement describes Jacob traveling in a southerly direction along the main north-south route through the hills from Bethel to Hebron, which would place the birthplace of Benjamin and the death and grave of Rachel somewhere north of Jerusalem. This is confirmed by 1 Samuel 10:2, Jeremiah 31:15 and Joshua 18:25, which imply that Rachel wept for her children near Ramah in the territory of Benjamin (Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2: Genesis 16-50; Gordon J. Wenham, Nelson Reference and Electronic, page 326).

In a manner, which is characteristic of the Hebrew language, in this passage the narrator presents the birth of Benjamin in summary fashion (“Rachel began to give birth”) and then details of this birth follow (“She suffered severe labor”).

The statement “she suffered severe labor” is the piel (intensive) form of the verb *qashah* (hʋ#q*) (kaw-shaw), which literally means, “she had a difficult time” in childbirth.

Genesis 35:17

“When she was in severe labor the midwife said to her, ‘Do not fear, for now you have another son.’”

The midwife comforts Rachel by informing that her child survived the difficult labor and that God had answered her prayer for another son and which prayer is recorded in Genesis 30:24 by the naming of her first son Joseph, whose name means, “May the Lord give me another son.”

Genesis 35:18

“It came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.”

The name “Ben-oni,” which Rachel gave her son as she was dying means, “son of my sorrow,” which expressed her anguish and pain she experienced while giving birth to him. However, Jacob did not want his son to feel guilty for the death of his mother but rather wanted him to feel loved and that he was fortunate to have him and so he changed the child’s name to “Benjamin,” which means, “son of my right hand.” The right hand in the ancient world denoted power or a man’s strength.

“Benjamin” (/YM!Y*N+b!) (bin-yaw-mene) was the lone full brother of Joseph since they had the same mother “Rachel” whereas the mothers of Jacob’s other ten sons were Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah (See Genesis 30:22-24, Genesis 35:18, 43:29).

“Benjamin” was also the only one of Jacob’s sons that was born in the land of Canaan since his other eleven sons and his daughter Dinah were born in Paddan Aram.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah were born in Paddan Aram according to Genesis 29:31-33, Issachar, Zebulun according to Genesis 30:14-21, Gad, Asher according to Genesis 30:9-13, Dan, Naphtali according to Genesis 30:1-8, Joseph according to Genesis 30:22-24 and Dinah according to Genesis 30:21.

Like his eleven brothers, “Benjamin” became the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, which bears his name. He is the focal point of the encounter of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt when the former was the prime minister of Egypt and unrecognized by his brothers.

In Genesis 46:21 the immediate descendants of Benjamin number ten, whereas in Numbers 26:38-40 only seven are enumerated, and some even under different names. This difference is probably owing to the circumstance that some of the direct descendants of Benjamin died at an early period, or, at least, childless.

At the first census during the Exodus the tribe of Benjamin numbered 35,400, ranking eleventh, but increased to 45,600 at the second census, ranking seventh. The Benjamites were men of war and famous slingers (Gen. 49:27; Judg. 3:15; 1 Ch. 8:40; 12:2) and were the first tribe in Israel to oppose the Philistines.

To Benjamin belongs the distinction of giving the first king to the Jews, Saul being a Benjamite (1 Sam. 9:1-2; 10:20-21) and they also supported David in his reign.

Jacob’s prophecy regarding Benjamin’s descendants future lot, and the development of his personal character in his tribe, is brief: “Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil” (Gen. 49:27).

The events of history cast light on that prediction, for the ravaging of the wolf is seen in the exploits of Ehud the Benjamite (Judg. 3), in Saul’s career, and especially in the whole matter of Gibeah, so carefully recorded in Judges 20 and Saul of Tarsus, who was the great persecutor of the church (Acts 8-9).

Other Benjamites of distinction were the prophet Jeremiah (1:1), Esther and Mordecai (Est. 2:5), and of course the apostle Paul (Rm. 11:1; Phlp. 3:5).

Genesis 35:19

“So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

There is great irony in the fact that Rachel died in childbirth since if you recall, in frustration she

complained to Jacob to “give me children or I will die” (See Genesis 30:1) and ultimately it was the gift of children, which killed her.

Rachel’s death like the death of every human being is the sovereign decision of God based upon the integrity of God and omniscient knowledge of all the facts.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, “There is an appointed time for everything, a time for everything under heaven. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die.”

Psalms 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.”

Ecclesiastes 7:1b, “The day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth.”

The death of a member of the human race is not ruled by chance or fate but according to the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

“Physical” death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30).

The believer’s physical body goes to the grave at physical death and his soul and human spirit go to be face to face with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8).

2 Corinthians 5:8, “we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.”

The believer will receive a resurrection body at the resurrection of the church, which is called by theologians, the “rapture” of the church.

1 Corinthians 15:54, “But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, ‘DEATH IS SWALLOWED UP in victory.’”

Jesus Christ’s death on the Cross has freed us from the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14, 15

“Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render

powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.”

“and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

Physical death cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

Romans 8:38, 39

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers.”

“nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Life hangs by a very fine thread that can be snapped at any moment and should motivate the believer to use the remainder of his time on earth to execute God’s plan for his life to become like Christ.

Romans 14:8, “For if we live, we live because of the Lord and if we die, we die because of the Lord therefore whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord.”

Genesis 35:21-22 presents to us the record of the incest of Reuben who has sex with his father’s concubine, Bilhah.

Genesis 35:21

“Then Israel journeyed on and pitched his tent beyond the tower of Eder.”

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the narrator, Moses, employs the name “Israel” rather than “Jacob,” which is significant since it indicates that Jacob is living in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name and is thus in the will of God.

The name “Israel” appears in Genesis 35:21 and 22 in order to establish Jacob’s authority over his household and nation, which is attacked by Reuben having sex with his concubine Bilhah.

The name *yisra’el*, “Israel” memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

“Israel” is the proper noun *yisra’el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed.

The name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

Therefore, the name “Israel” represents the character of his new divine nature whereas the name “Jacob” represents the character of his old Adamic sin nature, which will be permanently eradicated at his physical death.

“The tower of Eder” (or Migdal Eder) was simply a watchtower built to help shepherds protect their flocks from robbers (v. 21; cf. 2 Kings 18:8; 2 Chron. 26:10; 27:4). Since the time of Jerome, the early church father who lived in Bethlehem, tradition has held that Eder lay very close to Bethlehem (Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Genesis 2005 Edition, page 224).

Genesis 35:22

“It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine, and Israel heard of it.”

“Dwelling” is the verb *shakhan* (/k^v*), which means, “to temporarily dwell in a particular geographical location,” thus indicating Israel’s desire to stay at the tower of Eder on a temporary basis before he moved on to see his father at Hebron.

“Reuben” (/b@War+) (*r^e’uven*) (reh-oo-vane) was the first son that Leah bore to Jacob while in Paddan Aram according to Genesis 29:32 and his name means, “the Lord has seen my affliction.”

The name “Bilhah” *bilhah* (hh*!B!) means, “carefree” and she was given to Jacob by Rachel to be used as a concubine and bore Jacob two sons, Dan and Naphtali according to Genesis 30:1-8.

Bilhah’s relationship to Jacob as his “concubine” is identified to the reader. “Concubine” is the noun *pileghesh* (vg#l#P!) (pee-leh-gesh) which refers

to the fact that Bilhah was a second-class wife, acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights (see Genesis 30:4; Judges 19:1-4).

The people in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife so in effect Bilhah became Jacob’s concubine. In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be sent away with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

Having a concubine was often a sign of wealth and was recognized as a status symbol. The following men had concubines: (1) Nahor (Gen. 22:24) (2) Abraham (Gen. 25:6) (3) Jacob (Gen. 35:22) (4) Eliphaz (Gen. 36:12) (5) Saul (2 Sam. 3:7) (6) David (2 Sam. 5:13; 15:16; 16:21) Solomon (1 Kings 11:3).

As we saw in our study of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16, men and their wives sought concubines when the wife could not bear children. In these situations, wives presented their maidservants to their own husbands.

As Genesis 22:24 records, children of a concubine were not viewed as illegitimate but were considered part of the family.

“Lay” is the verb *shakhav* (bk^v*) (shaw-kahv), which is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex such as Lot’s daughters with Lot (19:32-35); the Philistines with Rebekah (26:10); Shechem with Dinah (34:2, 7); Reuben with Bilhah (35:22); Potiphar’s wife with Joseph (39:7, 10, 12, 14).

In Genesis 35:22, the verb *shakhav* indicates that Reuben and Bilhah had illicit sex in the sense that the two were not only committing adultery but also incest since Bilhah was Jacob’s concubine or secondary wife.

There is no indication from the original language of Genesis 35:22 or any other portion of Scripture that indicates that Bilhah was raped by Reuben since the verb *’anah* (hn*u*), “by force” is never

employed by the writer indicating a rape had taken place as when Shechem raped Dinah.

The fact that Reuben had sex with his father's wife was not only the sin of dishonoring his father but also an act of rebellion against his father's authority.

Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you."

1 Samuel 15:23, "For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry."

This incident between Reuben and Jacob's concubine, Bilhah is motivated by Reuben's love for his mother Leah rather than sexual lust since by defiling Bilhah, he makes certain that with Rachel's death her maid cannot supplant Leah as chief wife (Compare 2 Samuel 15:16; 16:22; 20:3).

The Mosaic Law prohibited incest because it dishonors the father and required the death penalty for both the man and the woman (See Leviticus 18:8; 20:11; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20).

Leviticus 20:11, "If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

Furthermore, it is interesting that according to secular ancient Near Eastern culture, by having sex with his father's concubine Reuben is attempting to usurp Jacob's authority in his household (Compare 2 Samuel 3:7-8; 12:7-8; 16:21-22; 1 Kings 2:13-25). Consequently, Reuben is deprived of leadership in the future as the firstborn of Jacob as reflected in the prophecy of Jacob concerning him (See Genesis 49:3-4).

As noted in Genesis 34, Simeon and Levi have also been disqualified for leadership because of massacring all the men of the city of Shechem and Hamor and his son Shechem for the rape of their sister Dinah. Therefore, Leah's fourth son, Judah will assume the leadership in the family and in fact would be the one to carry on the line of Christ.

The fact that Genesis 35:22 records Jacob, now Israel having heard of Reuben having sex with his concubine Bilhah appears to demonstrate once

again his passiveness and lack of moral outrage towards this incident. However, this is not the case since Genesis 49:3-5 reveals how Jacob feels about this incident and the use of the name "Israel" and not "Jacob" indicates that at this time he was living in a manner consistent with his new name.

Genesis 49:3-4, "Reuben, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power. Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it -- he went up to my couch."

The fact that Israel's response to his son's actions is delayed and not recorded until Genesis 49:3-4 reveals a spiritual principle expressed by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 8:11-12.

Ecclesiastes 8:11, 12

"Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil."

"Although a sinner does evil a hundred times and may lengthen his life, still I know that it will be well for those who fear God, who fear Him openly."

In Genesis 35:23-26, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Moses gives us the genealogy of Jacob or his family tree.

Genesis 35:23-26

"Now there were twelve sons of Jacob: the sons of Leah: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, then Simeon and Levi and Judah and Issachar and Zebulun; the sons of Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin; and the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid: Dan and Naphtali; and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maid: Gad and Asher. These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-aram."

Bruce K. Waltke, "With the completion of the twelve sons, they are listed in a summary catalogue (See Matthew 10:2-4; Revelation 21:12-14). They are presented based first on the social ranking of Jacob's wives and then on seniority.

Accordingly, the sons of Leah (35:23) and then of Rachel (35:24) are given before the sons of Bilhah (35:25) and Zilpah (35:26). Leah heads the list and her maidservant ends it. Within that frame are the sons of Rachel and her handmaid. The same sequence is found in Exodus 1:1-4, with Joseph necessarily expected in the context. Other sequences are given in Genesis 46:8-25 and 49:1-27, but Leah's sons always head the lists" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 478, Zondervan).

"Leah" (*le'ah*) (hā*l@) (lay-aw) means, "cow" and "Rachel" (*rachel*) (lj@r*) (raw-khale) means, "ewe," the female of the sheep, especially of the mature.

"Reuben" (/b@War+) (*re'uben*) (reh-oo-vane) was the first child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, "behold or see, a son" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:32.

In the Hebrew, the name "Reuben" honors the Lord and is a play on the consonants of the name having a similar sound to the Hebrew for "He (the Lord) looked (with concern) on my misery." Leah recognized the grace of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and hoped that Jacob would recognize the Lord's hand in this and that her bearing a son would not only raise her in Jacob's esteem but also cause him to love her but it did not.

"Simeon" (/w)um+v!) (*shim'on*) (shim-one) was the second child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, "the Lord has heard" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:33. The name "Simeon" in the Hebrew is from "the Lord has heard that I am hated," which echoes the similar remark made by the Lord to Hagar recorded in Genesis 16:11, "the LORD has given heed to your affliction."

The first two names of Leah's children replicate a pair of verbs ("to see" and "to hear") and express the Lord's providential concern and care for the unfortunate.

"Levi" (yw!!@) (*lewi*) (lay-vee) was the third child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, "My husband will be attached to me" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:34.

In spite of the Lord bestowing His grace upon her in giving her a third child, Leah does not have her hope realized and must learn to find her emotional

fulfillment in her relationship with the Lord. This child would be a blessing since the Aaronic priestly line in Israel and the tribe of Levi who ministered in the music and worship of the Temple were descended from Leah.

"Judah" (hd*Why+) (*yehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, "I will praise the Lord" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:35. By naming this fourth child *yehudhah*, "Judah," Leah is again honoring the Lord and expressing the fact that she is able to transcend her distress that her husband Jacob does not prefer her over Rachel. This child would be a blessing since King David and the Lord Jesus Christ would descend from the tribe of Judah.

Hebrews 7:14, "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah."

Though Leah was not the sole object of Jacob's affections, the Lord blessed her in the sense that He gave her the privilege of being the mother of Jacob's first four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah who was the ancestor of David and the Lord Jesus. Levi's descendants were given the honor of being the priestly tribe in Israel whereas King David and the Lord Jesus Christ were both from the tribe of Judah.

Leah names three of her first four children in honor of the Lord (29:32-33, 35) and by giving these names she confesses her faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, not the gods of her father Laban.

"Issachar" (rk*CC*y!) (*yis-saw-kawr*) was the fifth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, "reward" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:16-18. In Genesis 30:18, Leah's statement "God has given me my wages because I gave my maid to my husband" indicates that she viewed Issachar's birth as a reward for her giving Zilpah to Jacob. This statement implies that she viewed this as a costly sacrifice, though at the time the births of Gad and Asher were joyful occasions. She had misinterpreted the reason why God enabled her to get pregnant.

Leah had erroneously interpreted the meaning of her fifth son since the birth of Issachar was a gift of God's grace and a demonstration of His

compassion in response to her adverse circumstances. Leah erroneously chose to interpret this son as evidence of God's approval and blessing of her giving her maid Zilpah to Jacob.

In actuality, God "rewarded" Leah's faith in Him. Therefore, God in His grace heard Leah's prayer for a child and rewarded her faith in Him by giving her another son by Jacob.

"Zebulun" (/l%WbW+) (zeb-oo-loon) was the sixth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, "honor" as indicated by the verb *zaval*, "to honor in the sense of acknowledging (a woman) as one's lawful wife and sole object of one's love and affection" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:19-20.

"Joseph" ([s@w)y) (yoseph) was the first child that Rachel bore to Jacob and his name literally means, "He adds," which is a play on the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*), "to add" and is also a prayer for another child, foreshadowing the birth of Benjamin and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:22-24.

"Benjamin" (/YM!Y*N+b!) (bin-yaw-mene) was the last child that Rachel bore to Jacob and his name means, "son of my right hand" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 35:16-18.

If you recall, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin and named him "Ben-oni," which means, "son of my sorrow," expressing her anguish and pain she experienced while giving birth to him. However, Jacob did not want his son to feel guilty for the death of his mother but rather wanted him to feel loved and that he was fortunate to have him and so he changed the child's name to "Benjamin," which means, "son of my right hand." The right hand in the ancient world denoted power or a man's strength.

"Benjamin" was the lone full brother of Joseph since they had the same mother "Rachel" whereas the mothers of Jacob's other ten sons were Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah (See Genesis 30:22-24, Genesis 35:18, 43:29).

"Benjamin" was also the only one of Jacob's sons that was born in the land of Canaan since his other eleven sons and his daughter Dinah were born in Paddan Aram.

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah were born in Paddan Aram according to Genesis 29:31-33, Issachar, Zebulun according to Genesis 30:14-21, Gad, Asher according to Genesis 30:9-13, Dan, Naphtali according to Genesis 30:1-8, Joseph according to Genesis 30:22-24 and Dinah according to Genesis 30:21.

Benjamin is listed as born in Paddan Aram even though he was born in Canaan for theological reasons rather than factual concern since the emphasis is upon Jacob's sons as participating in the exodus from Paddan Aram to the land of Canaan.

The name "Bilhah" is the proper noun *bilhah* (hh*!B!), which means, "carefree."

Genesis 30:4 records that Rachel gave Bilhah to Jacob "as a wife" whereas Genesis 35:22 describes Bilhah as Jacob's "concubine." This apparent contradiction is reconciled when we understand that a concubine was considered in Abraham's day to be a "second-class wife," acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights.

In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be sent away with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

"Dan" (/D*) (dawn) was the first child that Bilhah bore Jacob and his name means, "God has vindicated me" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:5-6.

Rachel did not consider the birth of Dan merely as a blessing from the Lord but rather as the justice due her as a hopeless victim. On the surface, it appears that Rachel is spiritual by giving credit to God for Bilhah's pregnancy but in reality Rachel is using the Lord's name in vain since the use of concubines by God's people to solve barrenness in contrast to waiting on God is never authorized by God. She ascribes the success of her plot to God, but in reality God did not give her the child based on her prayer but rather He gave her the child as a result of his permissive will since the directive will

of God rules out concubines but the permissive will permitted the birth of this child.

She says that the birth of Dan was an answer to prayer but she is in error since God would never answer a prayer that is against His will and Rachel's use of a concubine rather than waiting on God to solve her problem of barrenness was against the will of God (See 1 John 5:14; James 4:3).

“Naphtali” (נַפְתָּלִי) (naf-taw-lee) was the second child that Bilhah bore to Jacob and his name means, “my wrestling” indicating that Rachel viewed her relationship with her sister Leah to be like a wrestling match and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:7-8.

In Genesis 30:8, the phrase “with my wrestlings I have wrestled” in the Hebrew text literally reads “wrestlings with God, I have wrestled (with my sister)” since the Hebrew contains the noun *naphtulim*, “wrestlings,” which is followed by the noun *Elohim*, “God” and the verb *pathal*, “to wrestle.”

Rachel's statement means that she wrestled in prayer with God to give her a child through Bilhah in order to be victorious over Leah. Of course, God did not give Bilhah a child based on Rachel's prayer because it was offered with wrong motivation and was against His will but rather God gave Bilhah a child based upon His permissive will. The statement made by Rachel on the occasion of the birth of Bilhah's second son is reflective of her true spiritual state at this time since it appears that she saw herself in a great wrestling match, not with God, but with her sister.

She states that she has triumphed over Leah by Bilhah giving birth to Naphtali. This is a ridiculous statement by Rachel since how can two adopted sons win out over four of Leah's sons? Therefore, Rachel's statement in Genesis 30:8 indicates that she erroneously believed that God was on her side with the birth of these two boys, Dan and Naphtali and has given her the victory over her sister Leah.

“Zilpah” is the proper noun *zilpah* (זִלְפָּה) (zil-paw), which means, “intimacy” and like Bilhah she was Jacob's concubine.

“Gad” (גָּד) (gawd) was the first boy that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis 30:9-11 and his name comes from “What good fortune” indicating that Leah attributed this child to fortune or good luck rather than God and his birth.

“Asher” (אֲשֵׁר) (aw-share) is the second son that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis 30:12-13 and his name means “women will call me happy” indicating that Leah thinks she is to be envied by other women.

The name of this child demonstrates that Leah's happiness is based upon her success over her sister Rachel. Leah's speech betrays her here since not once is God mentioned. She who previously had viewed her children as a gift from the Lord now sees these sons as merely good fortune—“How lucky I am,” “How fortunate,” and “How happy am I.” Devotion to the Lord has been thrown to the wind by Leah since the focus of her thinking has shifted from God's estimation of her actions to the praise she would be given by other women (verse 13).

Notice that in Genesis 35:23-26, “Dinah” is never mentioned, “not” because she is the only girl in the family but rather because she plays no role in the founding of the nation of Israel, which is the concern of the narrator Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

“Paddan Aram” (פַּדְדָּן אַרָם) is another name for “Aram Naharaim,” which means, “Aram of the Two Rivers.” Therefore, the word is synonymous with the name “Mesopotamia,” which appears in Genesis 24:10 since the word “Mesopotamia” is composed of the pronoun noun *Aram* (אַרָם), “Aram” and the plural form of the noun *nahar* (נְהָרִים), “two rivers.”

These two rivers were in the western part of Mesopotamia and the two rivers were the Balikh and the Khabur, tributaries of the Euphrates River.

The city of Haran was on the Balikh River about a seven hundred mile journey north-northeast of Beersheba and nearby was the city of Nahor, which was founded by Abraham's brother, Nahor.

The name “Paddan” means “field, plain” therefore, the expression “Paddan Aram” means, “plain of Aram.”

The name “Aram” (sr*a()) (Hebrew: *‘aram* pronounced arawm) means, “exalted” and is frequently translated “Syrian” or “Syria” and is used to speak specifically of the Aramean people who were a leading branch of Semitic people living in Mesopotamia and northern Syria (2 Sam. 8:5-6; 1 Kgs. 20:20-21).

Isaac and Jacob both took Aramean wives (Gen. 25:20; 28:5) and in fact, Jacob is called the “wandering Aramean” in Deuteronomy 26:5. Therefore, “Paddan Aram” refers to the city of Nahor where Abraham’s brother founded a city and named it after himself and was the place in which Laban and his family resided.

Genesis 35:27-29 completes our study of Genesis 35 and presents the record of Jacob arriving at Hebron and the death and burial of Isaac by his twin sons, Esau and Jacob and completes the eighth book in Genesis, which began in 25:19.

The eighth book of Genesis presents to us the family history of Isaac and in particular Jacob whose name was later changed by the Lord to “Israel” who would carry on the line of Christ and be the progenitor of the nation of Israel.

Genesis 35:27

“Jacob came to his father Isaac at Mamre of Kiriath-arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had sojourned.”

The name “Kiriath-arba” means, “the city of Arba” and was older name of “Hebron” according to Judges 1:10, Joshua 14:15, and 15:13.

“Hebron” was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

“Mamre” was located in “Hebron” as indicated by the phrase “that is, Hebron” and received its name from its owner, Mamre, who was a chief of the Amorites who sought security in an alliance with Abram and was blessed because of Abram (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24).

The “oaks of Mamre” evidently were a grove of terebinth trees that was owned by Mamre, which was the location of Abram’s encampment when he came up from Egypt according to Genesis 13:18, 14:13 and 18:1.

The word “sojourned” is the Hebrew verb *gur* (rWG) (goor), which refers to a specific legal status of a person who lives as a resident alien and is in a dependent legal status and is not a native.

The verb *gur*, “sojourned” signifies Jacob’s status as a “resident alien” meaning that while he lived in the land of Canaan he possessed neither land nor clan ties and was without traditional tribal legal support and protection and was vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by the Canaanites.

Genesis 35:28

“Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years.”

Genesis 35:29

“Isaac breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, an old man of ripe age; and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”

Isaac outlived his father Abraham by five years since Abraham died at one hundred seventy-five years of age according to Genesis 25:7 and Isaac also outlived his half-brother Ishmael by forty three years since Ishmael died at one hundred thirty-seven years of age according to Genesis 25:17.

“Breathed his last” is the verb *gawa* (uW^G*) (gaw-vaw), which pictures the act of drawing one’s last breath.

“Died” is the verb *muth* (tWm) (mooth), which denotes the general act of dying.

The expression gathered to his people” is always used with reference to believers (Abraham in Genesis 25:8; Ishmael in Genesis 25:17; Isaac in Genesis 35:29; Jacob in Genesis 49:33; Aaron in Numbers 20:24, 26; Deuteronomy 35:20).

The fact that Isaac was said to be “gathered to his people” does “not” refer to his death and burial because he was not buried with his ancestors but rather it refers to his life after death with those who before him died in faith such as Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah and Abraham.

Prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in Acts 1:9-11, Old Testament saints when they died went to a compartment of Hades, which the Lord Jesus Christ referred to as “Abraham’s bosom” in Luke 16 and called “Paradise” when He spoke to the thief on the Cross.

“Paradise” or “Abraham’s bosom” is known as “Sheol” in the Old Testament and “Hades” in the New Testament and the Scriptures reveals that it contains four compartments: (1) Paradise: the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to heaven after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:10). (2) Torments: the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from all dispensations (Lk. 16:19-31) who will be transferred to the Great White Throne Judgment that concludes human history and from there will be cast in the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). (3) Tartarus: the abode of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who had sex with woman in order to corrupt the human race and prevent the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 4; Jude 6). (4) The Abyss: the place of imprisonment for the demons who violated certain rules for angelic creation and will be released during the Tribulation (Lk. 8:30-31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 20:1-3).

Prior to the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints when they died did not go to the third heaven but rather to Paradise. These Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ascended with Jesus Christ into heaven as part of our Lord’s triumphal procession as victor in the angelic conflict and were part of the booty from our Lord’s victory that was accomplished through His death and resurrection.

Ephesians 4:8, “Therefore it says, ‘WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.’”

“He led host a host of captives” refers to Old Testament saints that were temporarily residing in the second compartment of Hades called Paradise (Lk. 16; 23:43).

Like his father Abraham, Isaac is said to have “died in a ripe old age” (See Genesis 25:8 and

15:5), which emphasizes that both men lived a long life and thus died at an elderly age.

Genesis 36

In the original Hebrew text, Genesis 36:1-37:1 is one of the longest sections in the book of Genesis constituting the ninth major section in the book presenting the genealogy or family history of Esau and his descendants. The family history of Esau, like that of Ishmael (See Genesis 25:12-18) immediately follows the obituaries of their fathers (See Genesis 25:7-10; 35:29).

Just as in the accounts of Abraham’s sons, the “rejected” line of Ishmael (See Genesis 25:12-18) is presented before the “elect” line of Isaac (See Genesis 25:19-35:29), so the accounts of Isaac’s sons, the “rejected” line of Esau (See Genesis 36:1-37:1) is presented before the “elect” line of Jacob (See Genesis 37:2-50:26).

The “rejected” descendants of the patriarchs are given because these sons are also under divine blessing according to the divine promises given to Abraham that are recorded in Genesis 17:20 and 27:38-40.

It is interesting that the twelve legitimate sons and grandsons of Esau listed in Genesis 36:9-14 match the twelve sons of Nahor (See Genesis 22:20-24), and of Ishmael (See Genesis 17:20; 25:13-16) and Israel (See Genesis 35:22b-26) indicating that these peoples existed as twelve tribe confederacies.

In Genesis 36, the superscription ‘*elleh toledhoth `esaw* (L#a@w+ tw)dl+T), “these are the descendants of Esau” is repeated thus dividing the chapter into two unequal halves and two genealogies.

The first genealogy appears in Genesis 36:1-8 presenting a one-generation “segmented” genealogy of Esau’s sons born in the land of Canaan whereas the second genealogy that appears in Genesis 36:9-43 is framed by the statement “Esau the father of the Edomites.”

This genealogy consists of two three-generation “segmented” genealogies of those born in Seir, which appear in Genesis 36:9-19 and 20-30. It also contains one “linear” genealogy containing the

succession of kings for eight generations before an Israelite king reigns (See Genesis 36:31-43).

When I say “segmented” genealogy I mean that the genealogies, which appear in Genesis 36:9-19 and 20-30 display the existing relations between individuals, which trace their lineage back to Esau. When I say “linear” genealogy I mean that the genealogy establishes continuity of the succession of kings descended from Esau over a stretch of time without narrative.

The following is an outline of the ninth major section in the book of Genesis, which appears in Genesis 36:1-37:1: (1) Title (36:1) (2) Esau’s marriages (36:2-5) (3) Esau’s move to Seir (36:6-8) (4) Esau’s sons and grandsons (36:9-14) (5) Chiefs (political or military leaders) descended from Esau (36:15-19) (6) Descendants of Seir the Horite (36:20-28) (7) Chiefs descended from Seir (36:29-30) (8) List of Edomite kings (36:31-39) (9) List of Chiefs (36:40-43) (10) Note about Jacob (37:1).

Now, although Genesis 36 may appear boring to read, to the serious student of the Word of God, it furnishes valuable information. Remember what Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

The purpose of the genealogies in Genesis 36 is seven-fold: (1) To demonstrate the Lord’s faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to Abraham that he would be “the father of a multitude of nations” (See Genesis 17:4). (2) To demonstrate the partial fulfillment of God’s promises to both Abraham and to Jacob that kings would come from them (Abraham-See Genesis 17:6 and 16; Jacob-See Genesis 35:11). (3) To demonstrate the Lord’s faithfulness in fulfilling His prophecies concerning Esau and his descendants, which are recorded in Genesis 25:23 and 27:39-40.

Genesis 25:23, “The LORD said to her (Rebekah), ‘Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.’”

Genesis 27:39-40, “Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, ‘Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck.’”

(4) To provide the nation of Israel the origins of her great enemies, namely, the Edomites (See Genesis 36:8) and the Amalekites (See Genesis 36:12).

The book of Genesis was originally written to the Israelites who were about to cross over the River Jordan to possess the land of Canaan and to annihilate the Canaanites (cf. Deuteronomy 1:8; 20:16-18). There were, however, some people who were not to be attacked or annihilated, among whom were the Edomites, the descendants of Esau according to Deuteronomy 2:1-5.

(5) Therefore, in order to insure that this command would not be disobeyed, it was most essential for those Israelites of Moses’ day to know who the Edomites were and to have a carefully documented record of the generations of Esau and that record is the substance of Genesis 36.

(6) To demonstrate that the Lord Jesus Christ controls history and is sovereign over the nations (See Deuteronomy 32:1-8; Psalm 66:7; Isaiah 40:15-17; Acts 17:26; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 6:15).

Isaiah 40:15, “Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust.”

Isaiah 40:17, “All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.”

(7) To present the distinction between the covenant people of God, the nation of Israel that was established based upon faith in the promises of *Yahweh*, the Lord Jesus Christ and the nation of Edom, which was based upon unbelief.

Genesis 36:1-8 presents the title for the ninth major section in the book of Genesis as well as

Esau's genealogy or family history and his exodus from Canaan and his move to Seir.

Genesis 36:1

“Now these are the records of the generations of Esau (that is, Edom).”

“These are the records of the generations of Esau” refers to the record of the descendants of Esau, which follows in Genesis 36:2-43 as indicated by the noun *toledhoth* (toh-led-aw) (tw{dl@w{T}), “the records of the generations” which is always used as an introduction to what follows.

“Esau” (WC*U@) was the older twin brother of Jacob whose father was Isaac and mother was Rebekah and was the father of Edomite nation and whose name means, “hairy,” implying an animalistic nature.

“Edom” is the proper noun *edhom* (sw)da\$) (ed-ome), which literally means, “red,” and was the name given to Esau to mark the occasion in which he exchanged his birthright to Jacob for some red lentil soup (See Genesis 25:29-34).

Esau's personal name is transformed into the national name Edom just as Jacob's personal name was transformed to the national name Israel.

Genesis 36:2-3

“Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite, also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth.”

The statement “Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan” was against the will of God and demonstrates Esau's contempt for the plan of God since the prophecy of Noah, which is recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 prohibited Isaac's family from marrying Canaanites since they were under a curse.

The family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was prohibited by God from entering into marriage with the Canaanites and instead were to marry Shemites since Noah prophesied in Genesis 9:20-27 that Canaan was under a curse and that Shem was in the line of Christ.

Genesis 9:25, “So he (Noah) said, ‘Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.’”

Thus, in Genesis 24:2-4, Abraham prohibited his servant Eliezer from taking a wife for his son Isaac from among the Canaanites and commanded him to go to his relatives in Paddan Aram who were descendents of Shem. Not only did Abraham seek a wife for Isaac among the Arameans rather than the Canaanites but also Isaac did as well for Jacob according to Genesis 28:6-7. The reason for this is that Abraham and Isaac and the Arameans were descendants of Shem (i.e. Semitic) who according to the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 were in the line of Christ.

As we noted in our study of Genesis 28:6-9 we studied that neither Jacob nor Esau had ever previously been taught by their parents, Isaac and Rebekah that marriage to Canaanite women was against the will of God and unsatisfactory to their parents. This is confirmed by Esau's shock upon learning that his Canaanite wives were displeasing to his father and so therefore, to make matters right, he went and married an Ishmaelite, which is recorded in Genesis 28:6-9.

Unlike the Canaanites and Aramean women embraced the faith of their husbands, unlike the Canaanite women who seduce their husbands to join their lifestyles (See Genesis 24:4; 26:34-35; 31:50). The Canaanites were idolatrous (Deut. 29:17), involved in the occult (Deut. 18:9-10) and gross immorality (Lev. 18), which archaeology confirms. The Lord used the nation of Israel under Joshua to pour out His judgment upon the Canaanites for their immoral degeneracy (Gen. 15:16; 19:5; Lev. 18; 20; Deut. 12:31). They were defeated on the battlefield, destroyed, or integrated with other nations or enslaved to Israel (Gen. 14:1-16; 15:18-21; Ex. 3:7-10; Deut. 1-3; Josh. 10-19).

“Adah” (hd*u*) (*adhah*: pronounced aw-daw) is the first wife of Esau mentioned and her name means, “ornament” and her father was “Elon” (/w)lya@) (*elon*, which is pronounced ay-lone), whose name means, “terebinth.”

“Oholibamah” (hm*b*y!!h&a*) (*oh-livamah*, which is pronounced o-hol-ee-baw-maw) is the

second wife of Esau mentioned and her name means, “tent of the high place.”

Her father was “Anah” (hd**u**) (*anah*, which is pronounced an-aw) whose name means, “answer,” whose grandfather was “Zibeon” (/w)ub+x!) (*tsiv`on*, which is pronounced tsiv-one) whose name means, “colored” and who was a Hivite.

“Basemath” (tm^C+B*) (bos-math) is the third wife of Esau that is mentioned and her name means, “fragrance” and she was “Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth” and she is not to be confused with the “Basemath” mentioned in Genesis 26:34 whose father was Elon, the Hittite.

Her brother was “Nebaioth” (ty)b*n+) (*n`vayoth*, which is pronounced neb-aw-yoth) whose name means, “heights” and who was the firstborn son of Ishmael according to Genesis 25:13 and 28:9.

The fact that “Adah” was a “Hittite” and “Oholibamah” was a “Hivite” meant that Esau's marriages to these women were totally out of the will of God since both the Hittites and the Hivites were descendants of Canaan. Even though Basemath was an Ishmaelite and therefore a descendant of Shem, Esau's marriage to her was also out of the will of God since Isaac and not Ishmael was in the line of Christ.

Now, a problem arises when we compare the list of Esau's wives recorded in Genesis 36:2-3 with the lists recorded in Genesis 26:34 and 28:9.

Genesis 36:2-3 records that Esau married “Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite, also Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, the sister of Nebaioth.”

Genesis 26:34 records that Esau married “Judith, the daughter of Beeri the Hittite and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite” whereas Genesis 28:9 records that Esau married “Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, the sister of Nebaioth.”

The solution to this apparent contradiction is found when we understand that the purpose of Genesis 36 is to present the family history of Esau and so the women in Genesis 36:2-3 that bore Esau children would serve this purpose whereas

the women in Genesis 26:34 and 28:9 died childless and would not.

Genesis 36:4-5

“Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel, and Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah. These are the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.”

Genesis 36:4-5 reveals that Esau's wives, Adah, Basemath and Oholibamah bore to Jacob five sons while he lived in the land of Canaan.

Adah bore to Esau “Eliphaz” (zp^y!|a\$) (*Eliphaz*, which is pronounced el-ee-faz), whose name means, “God is fine gold.”

Basemath bore to Esau “Reuel” (la@Wur+) (*r`e`el*, which is pronounced reh-oo-ale), whose name means, “friend of God.”

Oholibamah bore to Jacob three sons: (1) “Jeush” (vyu!y+) (*y`ish*, which is pronounced yeh-oosh), whose name means, “helper.” (2) “Jalam” (<l**u*+y^) (*ya`lam*, which is pronounced yaw-lawm), whose name means, “concealed.” (3) “Korah” (jr^q) (*qorach*, which is pronounced ko-rahk), whose name means, “bald head.”

Genesis 36:6

“Then Esau took his wives and his sons and his daughters and all his household, and his livestock and all his cattle and all his goods which he had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to another land away from his brother Jacob.”

Esau has already “temporarily” occupied Seir prior to Jacob's return to Canaan according to Genesis 32:3, 33:14, 16, however, he does not “permanently” remove his family from the land of his forefathers until Jacob's return (See Genesis 35:29).

Genesis 36:7

“For their property had become too great for them to live together, and the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock.”

The statement “for their property had become too great for them to live together” indicates that Esau and his family left the land of Canaan for

“economic” reasons in that there was an insufficiency of natural resources to support both Esau and Jacob’s flocks and herds.

The statement “the land where they sojourned could not sustain them because of their livestock” indicates that Esau also left Canaan for “social” reasons in that the land was overcrowded since not only were the Canaanites inhabiting the land but also Jacob and Esau’s family.

These social and economic reasons for Esau leaving Canaan were the direct result of God blessing both men abundantly.

Esau left the land of Canaan instead of Jacob for two reasons: (1) Jacob had just returned to Canaan. (2) Jacob was promised the land by God.

During the twenty years apart from each other, Esau realized that Jacob was properly entitled to the birthright and the blessing and that God had chosen Jacob to be in the line of Christ and inherit the blessings, promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant.

Esau was able to accept that Jacob was entitled to the birthright, the blessing and the land of Canaan because God had prospered Esau with possessions and posterity. This is indicated by his statement to Jacob in Genesis 33:19 when Jacob urged him to accept his gifts as restitution, “I have plenty, my brother; let what you have be your own.”

Furthermore, Esau was able to accept that Jacob was entitled to the land of Canaan since God had made him a great nation, the nation of Edom, which would have given him fulfillment and prevented him from becoming jealous of Jacob’s great prosperity.

Genesis 36:8

“So Esau lived in the hill country of Seir; Esau is Edom.”

“Seir” (ryu!C@) (*se`ir*, which is pronounced say-*eer*) demarcates the Edomite territory, which was situated at the southeast border of Palestine (Judges 11:17; Numbers 34:3) and was properly called “the land of Seir” (Genesis 36:8; Gen 32:3; Joshua 24:4; Ezekiel 35:3, 7, 15) and “the country of Edom.”

Genesis 36:9-30 concerns itself with the sons and chiefs of Esau to the third generation as well as the Horites of Seir.

Genesis 36:9

“These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.”

A comparison of the statement “These then are the records of the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites” that appears in Genesis 36:9 with the statement “Esau is Edom” that appears in Genesis 36:8 indicates an advance in status of Esau from an individual person to a nation.

Genesis 36:10

“These are the names of Esau's sons: Eliphaz the son of Esau's wife Adah, Reuel the son of Esau's wife Basemath.”

The sequence of Esau’s wives is presented according to the descending number of children and so Adah is listed first because she bore to Esau five children who is then followed in Genesis 36:13 by Basemath who bore to Esau four children and then lastly, Oholibamah, in Genesis 36:14 who bore three children.

Genesis 36:11-14 presents the grandsons of Esau through his five sons.

Genesis 36:11

“The sons of Eliphaz were Teman (*teman* [/m*ʔ] [tay-mawn]

“south country”), **Omar** (*omar* [rm*w]a) [o-mawr]

“eloquent”), **Zepho** (*ts^epho* [w]px+) [tsef-o]

“watchtower”) and **Gatam** (*ga`tam* [<T*u+G^] [gah-tawm]

“a burnt valley”) and **Kenaz** (*gonaz* [zn^q() [ken-az]

“hunter”).”

Genesis 36:12

“Timna (*timna`* [un^m+ʔ] [tim-naw]

“restrained”) **was a concubine of Esau's son Eliphaz and she bore Amalek** (*amaleq* [q|@m*u&] [am-aw-lake]

“dweller in a valley”) **to Eliphaz. These are the sons of Esau's wife Adah.**”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau’s wife Adah” does “not” refer to the children that Esau had with Adah but rather it refers to his grandchildren through his wife Adah since the children listed were fathered by his son Eliphaz who Adah bore to Esau.

In the Hebrew and Aramaic languages there is no specific word for grandson so that the word “son” can refer to any descendant down the line.

Genesis 36:12 is “parenthetical” since it deals with Esau’s concubine, Timna who bore to him, Amalek. As we noted earlier, when the Israelites crossed over the Jordan River to possess the land of Canaan and to annihilate the Canaanites, the Edomites, the descendants of Esau were not to be attacked according to Deuteronomy 2:1-5. However, the descendants of Amalek, the Amalekites did not come under this protection since he was a child of a concubine.

The Amalekites were a warlike tribe, living south of Canaan on the road to the land of Canaan and when Israel did journey to Canaan, they stood against Israel to war. This first military confrontation was memorable because Aaron and Hur held Moses’ arms up as he held the rod of God so that Joshua and the Israelite army could defeat the Amalekites (See Exodus 17:8-16). Exodus 17:8-16 records God declaring war on the Amalekites “from generation to generation.”

Israelite armies fought them in both Saul (See 1 Samuel 15:2) and David’s reign (See 1 Samuel 27:8; 30:1-20) and they were eventually destroyed during the reign of Hezekiah (See 1 Chronicles 4:43).

Genesis 36:13

“These are the sons of Reuel: Nahath (*nachath* [tj^n^] [nakh-ath]

“rest”) **and Zerah** (*zerach* [jr^z#] [zeh-rakh]

“rising”), **Shammah** (*shammah* [hM*v^] [sham-maw]

“astonishment”) **and Mizzah** (*mizzah* [hZ*m!] [miz-zaw]

“fear”). **These were the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.**”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau’s wife Basemath” does “not” refer to the children that Esau had with Basemath but rather it refers to his grandchildren through his wife Basemath since the children listed were fathered by his son Reuel who Basemath bore to Esau.

Genesis 36:14

“**These were the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah and the granddaughter of Zibeon: she bore to Esau, Jeush** (*yesh*, [vyu!y+] [yeh-oosh]

“helper”) **and Jalam** (*yalam* [l*uy^] [yaw-lawm]

“concealed”) **and Korah** (*qorach* [jr^q]) [ko-rakh]

“bald head”).”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau’s wife Oholibamah” does refer to the children that Esau had with Oholibamah and not his grandchildren. The reason for this is that this statement echoes the statement in Genesis 36:5, “Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah,” which appears in the context of the sons Esau fathered through his wives Adah, Basemath and Oholibamah in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 36:15-18 presents a list of chiefs that descended from Esau, who were of course, his grandsons.

Genesis 36:15-16

“**These are the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn of Esau, are chief Teman, chief Omar, chief Zepho, chief Kenaz, chief Korah, chief Gatam, chief Amalek. These are the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Adah.**”

The statement “These are the sons of Adah” does “not” mean that the chiefs listed were sons Adah bore to Esau but rather to her grandchildren since they are said to be sons of Eliphaz who she bore to Esau.

The name “Korah” appears as a tribal chief under Eliphaz who was the son of Adah and it also appears under Oholibamah since the list of chiefs descending from Esau reflects the political development of Edomite tribal history. Therefore, “Korah” appears as a tribal chief under Eliphaz in order to reflect the fact that the Korahites split off from the Oholibamah group and attached itself to the Eliphaz confederation.

Also, “Amalek” is included among the tribal chiefs descending from Esau under Eliphaz whereas he is not included in the list of Esau’s grandsons because he was a child of a concubine, “Timna.” The reason for this is also to reflect the political development of Edomite tribal history and so the tribe of Amalek also incorporated itself into the Eliphaz confederation.

Furthermore, the name of Eliphaz’ concubine, Timna, is given but his primary wife is not and the reason for this is because of the future prominence of her son, Amalek, who became the ancestor of the infamous Amalekites, who were perpetual enemies of the nation of Israel.

The statement “These are the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in the land of Edom” means that these seven sons of Eliphaz were “not” born in the land of Canaan, like Esau’s five sons but rather they were born in the land of Edom.

Genesis 36:17

“These are the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: chief Nahath, chief Zerah, chief Shammah, chief Mizzah. These are the chiefs descended from Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Esau's wife Basemath.”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau’s wife Basemath” does “not” mean that the four chiefs listed were sons Basemath bore to Esau but rather they refer to her grandchildren since they are said to be sons of Reuel who she bore to Esau.

The statement “These are the chiefs descended from Reuel in the land of Edom” means that these four sons of Reuel were “not” born in the land of Canaan, like Esau’s five sons but rather they were born in the land of Edom.

Genesis 36:18

“These are the sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah: chief Jeush, chief Jalam, chief Korah. These are the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah, the daughter of Anah.”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau’s wife Oholibamah” does refer to the children that Esau had with Oholibamah and not grandchildren. The reason for this is that the statement echoes the statement in Genesis 36:5, “Oholibamah bore Jeush and Jalam and Korah,” which appears in the context of the sons Esau fathered through his wives.

Genesis 36:19

“These are the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these are their chiefs.”

The statement “These are the sons of Esau (that is Edom)” refers to Esau’s grandchildren through his sons Eliphaz and Reuel (See Genesis 36:15-17) and his sons through his wife Oholibamah (See Genesis 36:18), all of which became chiefs of tribes according to the statement “These are their chiefs.”

The genealogy recorded in Genesis 36:20-30 is a “segmented” genealogy, which is bracketed by a list of seven identical Horite chiefs in Seir (36:20-21, 29-30). When I say “segmented” genealogy I mean that the genealogy, which appears in Genesis 36:20-30 displays the existing relations between individuals who trace their lineage back to Seir, the Horite.

The genealogy presents seven sons and one daughter of Seir the Horite (36:20-22) and extends to twenty sons of the third generation (36:21-28). The conclusion identifies the seven sons of the first generation as chiefs. Esau either destroys (See Deuteronomy 2:22) or marries (See Genesis 36:20, 22, 25) these aboriginal inhabitants of Seir.

Genesis 36:20-21

“These are the sons of Seir (*se`ir* [ryu!C@] [say-eer]

“hairy”) the Horite (*chori* [yr!]) [kho-ree]

“cave dweller”), the inhabitants of the land:

Lotan (*lotan* [/f*w]) [lo-tawn]

“covering”) and Shobal (*shoval* [lB^w)v] [show-vaw]

“flowing”) and **Zibeon** (*tsiv`on* [/w]ub+x!) [tsiv-one]

“colored”) and **Anah** (*adhah* [hd*u*] [aw-daw]

“ornament”), and **Dishon** (*dishon* [/v*yD!] [dee-shown]

“thresher”) and **Ezer** (*etser* [rx#a@] [ay-tser]

“treasure”) and **Dishan** (*dishan* [/cyD!] [dee-shawn]. “thresher”). **These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, the sons of Seir in the land of Edom.**”

The name “Seir” is “eponymous” meaning that it refers to an historical person whose name is the source of the name of a geographical area, which was a mountainous region, located primarily east of the Gulf of Aqaba, but west as well.

“The land of Edom” mentioned in Genesis 36:21 is synonymous with the “land of Seir” mentioned in Genesis 36:30.

“The Horites” were mentioned in Genesis 14:6 as being defeated by the Eastern Mesopotamian Coalition in the days of Abraham and were cave dwellers and Esau either destroys (See Deuteronomy 2:22) or marries (See Genesis 36:20, 22, 25) them.

“The Horites” were rather disorganized until Esau came in and brought them together and gave them leadership and united them with his people and as a result they intermarried and together became the Edomites.

Genesis 36:22

“**The sons of Lotan were Hori** (*chori* [yr!]) [kho-ree]

“cave dweller”) and **Hemam** (*hemam* [<m*yh@] [ho-mawm]

“confusion”); and **Lotan's sister was Timna** (Eliphaz' concubine-See Genesis 36:12).”

Genesis 36:23

“**These are the sons of Shobal: Alvan** (*alwan* [/w*|+u^] [al-vawn]

“tall”) and **Manahath** (*manachath* [tj^`n^m*] [maw-nakh-ath]

“tall”) and **Ebal** (*eval* [lb*yu@] [ay-vawl]

“stone”), **Shepho** (*shepho* [w]pv+) [shef-o]

“bold”) and **Onam** (*onam* [<n*w)a] [o-nawm]

“vigorous”).”

Genesis 36:24

“**These are the sons of Zibeon: Aiah** (*ayah* [hY*a^] [ah-yaw]

“falcon”) and **Anah** (*adhah* [hd*u*] [aw-daw]

“ornament”) -- **he is the Anah who found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.**”

The statement that Anah “found the hot springs in the wilderness when he was pasturing the donkeys of his father Zibeon” is the only anecdote in this genealogy, distinguishing Anah from his uncle of the same name who is mentioned in Genesis 36:20 and 25. Hot springs are still found southeast of the Dead Sea in Edomite territory.

Genesis 36:25

“**These are the children of Anah: Dishon** (*dishon* [/v*yD!] [dee-shown]

“thresher”), and **Oholibamah** (*oh-livamah* [hm*b*y!!h&a*] [o-hol-ee-baw-maw]

“tent of the high place”), **the daughter of Anah.**”

Genesis 36:26

“**These are the sons of Dishon: Hemdan** (*chemdan* [tw)dm%j&] [khem-dawn]

“desire”) and **Eshban** (*Eshban* [/P*v+a#] [esh-bawn]

“fire of discernment, intelligent, thoughtful”) and **Ithran** (*yithran* [/r*t+y!] [yith-rawn],

“advantage”) and **Cheran** (*keran* [/r*K+] [ker-awn]

“lyre”).”

Genesis 36:27

“**These are the sons of Ezer: Bilhan** (*bilhan* [/h*|+B!] [bil-hawn]

“their decrepitude”) and **Zaavan** (*za`awan* [/w*u&z^] [zah-av-awn]

“troubled”) and **Akan** (*aqan* [/q*u&] [aw-kawn]

“sharp-sighted”).”

Genesis 36:28

“**These are the sons of Dishan: Uz** (*ʿuts* [JWu] [oots]

“wooded”) **and Aran** (*ʿaran* [/r* a&] [aw-rawn] “joyous”).”

Genesis 36:29-30

“**These are the chiefs descended from the Horites: chief Lotan, chief Shobal, chief Zibeon, chief Anah, chief Dishon, chief Ezer, chief Dishan. These are the chiefs descended from the Horites, according to their various chiefs in the land of Seir.**”

1 Chronicles 1:38-42 contains a list of names that parallels this list of sons and chiefs of Esau to the third generation as well as the Horites of Seir, which appears in Genesis 36:9-30.

Genesis 36:31-37:1 presents to us the kings and chiefs of Edom as well as the geographical division of Esau and Jacob. Genesis 36:31-43a presents a “linear” list of eight kings meaning that this list establishes continuity of the succession of eight kings who reigned in Edom over a stretch of time without narrative.

Genesis 36:31

“**Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel.**”

The line of succession of these kings of Edom is related to their different capitals as indicated by the phrase “his city,” which appears in Genesis 36:32, 35, and 39 and is used of three of the eight kings. The reason why three of the kings are said to have a city and the other five are not said to have a city does not indicate that the five did not have a city but that the five used the city of their predecessor until his successor shifted to another city.

The fact that the line of succession of these eight kings of Edom is related to their different capitals suggests an elective kingship and not a dynastic one. Further substantiating this is that the line of succession of the kings of Edom was “not” hereditary since none of these eight kings

succeeded his father. The Scripture does not tell us if they were elected based upon their charisma or intelligence or based upon their military prowess.

The statement “Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel” indicates quite clearly that kings reigned in Edom before Israel had her first king, which was Saul.

Now, the critics of the Bible contend that Moses did not write this statement but rather either David or Saul since there were no kings in Israel during the time of Moses. However, they fail to take into consideration that Moses knew prophetically that Israel would eventually have kings (See Deuteronomy 17:14-20).

Genesis 36:32

“**Bela** (*bela* [ul^B#] [beh-lah]

“destruction” [first king of Edom]) **the son of Beor** (*b^eor* [rw{uB+}] [beh-ore]

“burning”) **reigned in Edom, and the name of his city was Dinhabah** (*dinhavah* [hb*h*n+D!] [din-haw-vaw]

“give you judgment” [site has not been located by archaeologists]).”

Genesis 36:33

“**Then Bela died, and Jobab** (*yovav* [bb*w)y] [yo-vawv]

“a desert”) [second king of Edom] **the son of Zerach** (*zerach* [jr^z#] [zeh-rahk]

“rising”) **of Bozrah became king in his place.**”

“Bozrah” is the proper noun *botsrah* (hr*x+B*) (bots-raw), which means, “fortress” and has been identified with the modern village Buseira, which is located 25 miles southwest of the southern end of the Dead Sea.

Archaeological excavations reveal that the town was heavily fortified covering twenty acres serving as a crossing point for several principle highways and was a major center for shepherding, weaving and the manufacture of dyed garments.

Genesis 36:34

“Then Jobab died, and Husham (*chusham* [$<v^*j\%$] [khoo-shawm]

“haste” [third king of Edom]) **of the land of the Temanites became king in his place.”**

The “land of the Temanites” appears to have been located at the southern end of Edom with Bozrah, its capital in the north since the meaning of “Teman,” is “south country.”

Genesis 36:35

“Then Husham died, and Hadad (*hadhadh* [dd^h&] [had-ad]

“mighty” [fourth king of Edom]) **the son of Bedad** (*bedhadh* [dd^B+] [bed-ad]

“solitary”), **who defeated Midian in the field of Moab, became king in his place; and the name of his city was Avith** (*awith* [tyw!U&] [av-veeth]

“ruins” [site has not been located by archaeologists]).”

“Midian” (*midhyan* [/y*d+m!] [mid-yawn], “strife”) was the fourth son of Abraham through his concubine Keturah according to Genesis 25:2.

Midian’s descendants were a well-known Arabian tribe east of the Gulf of Aqabah and the Red Sea who traded in gold and incense according to Isaiah 60:6, Genesis 37:25, 28, and did this from Moab to Sinai and Ephah according to Numbers 22:4, 7, Judges 6-8.

The first wife of Moses, Zipporah was a Midianite and her brother Hobab guided Israel through the steppe of Sinai (Num. 10:29-32) and later, Midianites in association with the Moabites fought Israel (Num. 25; 31:1-12) and Gideon drove them out of Israel (Judges 7-8).

“The field of Moab” (*mo'av* [ba*w)m] [mo-awv], “of his father”) was located along the eastern border of the Dead Sea, on the plateau between the Dead Sea and the Arabian desert and was about 35 miles long and 25 miles wide.

Although it was primarily a high plateau, Moab also had mountainous areas and deep gorges and it was a fertile area for crops and herds and to the south and west of Moab was the nation of Edom and to the north was Ammon.

The phrase “the plains of Moab” found in Numbers 22:1 is distinguished from the phrase “the field of Moab.” The “field of Moab” was a narrow strip of arable land east of the Dead Sea, whose boundaries were the Dead Sea on the west, the Arnon Gorge on the north, the Arabian Desert on the east and the Zered River canyon on the south.

The “plains of Moab” are referred to throughout the Balaam story in the book of Numbers since this was where the Israelites camped as they made their way to the land of Canaan (See Numbers 22:1).

Genesis 19:30-38 records that “Moab” was the product of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter after their flight from Sodom according to Genesis 19:30-37.

The Moabites and the Ammonites were the bitter enemies of Israel (see Num. 23-25; 2 Kings 3) and as a result were rejected by God but not because of their questionable lineage (see Deut. 23:3-6) and yet from this lineage will come Ruth, and so Jesus Christ (see Ruth 4:18-22; Matt. 1:5).

Genesis 36:36

“Then Hadad died, and Samlah (*samlah* [hl*m+c^] [sam-law]

“garment” [fifth king of Edom]) **of Masrekah** (*masreqah* [hq*r@c+m&] [mas-ray-kaw]

“vineyard of noble vines”) **became king in his place.”**

The name “Masrekah” indicates a grape growing region and has been identified with Jebel el-Mushrak, located approximately 22 miles south-southwest of Maan.

Genesis 36:37

“Then Samlah died, and Shaul (*sha'ul* [lWav*] [shaw-ool]

“desired” [sixth king of Edom]) **of Rehoboth on the Euphrates River became king in his place.”**

“Rehoboth” is the proper noun *r^echovoth* (tw)bj)r+ (rekh-o-both), which means, “space” and was located on the Euphrates River according to Genesis 36:37.

“Euphrates River” is the noun *nahar* (rḥ*ṇ*) (naw-hawr), which is usually used in Scripture with reference to the Euphrates River, however, the river in question is very far from Edom and actually refers to the Wadi el-Hesa, which is the natural border between Edom and Moab.

Genesis 36:38

“Then Shaul died, and Baal-hanan (*ba`al* [lu^B^] [bah-al khaw-nawn]

“Baal is gracious” [seventh king of Edom]) **the son of Achbor** (*akhbor* [rw]Bk+u^] [ak-bore]

“mouse”) **became king in his place.**”

Genesis 36:39

“Then Baal-hanan the son of Achbor died, and **Hadar** (*hadhar* [rd^h&] [had-ar]

“adornment” [eighth king of Edom]) **became king in his place; and the name of his city was Pau** (*pa`u* [WuP*] [paw-oo]

“bleating” [site has not been located by archaeologists]); **and his wife's name was Mehetabel** (*m^ehetav`el* [la@b+f^yh@m+] [meh-hay-tav-ale]

“favored of God”), **the daughter of Matred** (*matredh* [dr@f+m^] [mat-rade]

“drive away”), **daughter of Mezahab** (*me zahav* [bh*z* ym@] [may-zaw-hawv]

“waters of gold”).”

Hadar’s father is not named but rather his mother and grandmother indicating that his mother possessed a very distinguished ancestry.

Genesis 36:40-43

“Now these are the names of the chiefs descended from Esau, according to their families and their localities, by their names: **chief Timna** (*timna`* [un^m+T!] [tim-naw]

“restrained”), **chief Alvah** (*alwah* [hw*l+u^] [al-vaw]

“evil”), **chief Jetheth** (*y^etheth* [tt@y+] [yeh-thayth]

“nail”), **chief Oholibamah** (*oh-livamah* [hm*b*y!h&a*] [o-hol-ee-baw-maw]

“tent of the high place”), **chief Elah** (*elah* [hl*a@] [ay-law]

“an oak”), **chief Pinon** (*pinon* [/n)yP!] [pee-none]

“darkness”), **chief Kenaz** (*qonaz* [zn^q()] [ken-az]

“hunter”), **chief Teman** (*teman* [/m*T] [tay-mawn]

“south country”), **chief Mibzar** (*mivtsar* [rx*b+m!] [miv-tsawr]

“fortress”), **chief Magdiel** (*maghdi`el* [la@yD!l+m^] [mag-dee-ale]

“gift of God”), **chief Iram** (*iram* [<r*yu!] [ee-rawm]

“belonging to a city”). **These are the chiefs of Edom (that is, Esau, the father of the Edomites), according to their habitations in the land of their possession.**”

1 Chronicles 1:43-54 contains a parallel list of these Edomite Kings that appear in Genesis 36:31-43. The list of Edomite chiefs that appears in Genesis 36:15-19 is different than the list of Edomite kings that appears in Genesis 36:40-43 since the former contains fourteen names whereas the latter contains eleven names and the names “Oholibamah, Kenaz, Teman” appear in both lists.

The list of Edomite chiefs that appears in Genesis 36:15-19 is “historical” and “genealogical” whereas the list that appears in Genesis 36:40-43 is “geographical” and “statistical.”

The fact that the list of Genesis 36:40-43 is “geographical” is indicated by the phrases “according to...their localities” and “according to their habitations in the land of their possession” and it is “statistical” as indicated by the phrase “according to their families...by their names.”

Therefore, the list of Genesis 36:40-43 is apparently arranged by localities that are identical with the clan names, which may reflect Edomite administrative districts within the kingdom.

In the original Hebrew text, Genesis 37:1 is grammatically connected to Genesis 36 and completes the ninth major section of Genesis, which began in Genesis 36:1.

We must also remember that the original Hebrew and Greek texts did not have chapter divisions and

were not inspired by God. Genesis 37:1 is called a “colophon” meaning it is a note that comes at the end of a book, thus the statement regarding Jacob in Genesis 37:1 is simply a note that comes at the end of the ninth section in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 37:1, “Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.”

The statement “Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan” is an unusual addition to the account of Esau’s descendants and is used in direct contrast with the statement contained in Genesis 36:8, “So Esau...settled in the hill country of Seir.”

Therefore, the statement “Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan” is employed to demonstrate the geographical and spiritual division between Jacob and Esau and their descendants.

Genesis 37:1 is called a “Janus” section book, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after. Therefore, Genesis 37:1 looks back at Genesis 36 and the account of Esau’s descendants settling in Seir and looks forward to Jacob and his sons in the land of Canaan, thus this passage serves to contrast Jacob’s commitment to the land of Canaan with Esau’s migration to Mount Seir.

The Tragic Life of Esau

The life of Esau is a tragic story because even though he was born into a home of great privilege, which had a tremendous spiritual heritage, he remained an unbeliever. At no time in his life, did he ever place his faith in the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Esau was born into a family that was ordained by God to receive the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the covenant God made with Abraham. His brother Jacob would be in the line of Christ and the father of the nation of Israel, which would be the vehicle used by God to bring in the Savior of the world.

God blessed Esau by making him the progenitor of a great nation as well, namely, the nation of Edom, yet he never accepted Christ as his Savior and thus now resides in “Torments,” which is the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from every dispensation according to Luke 16:19-31. Eventually, like all unbelievers he will be transferred to the Great White Throne Judgment according to Revelation 20:11-15 and from there will be cast into the eternal Lake of Fire because of his rejection of Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Remember, Esau was the older twin brother of Jacob whose father was Isaac and mother was Rebekah. As we have noted before, his name means, “hairy,” implying an animalistic nature and describes him as “the hairy monster.” As we also noted before as well, he became the father of the Edomite people who later became the arch rivals of the Israelites.

Esau’s mother’s Rebekah received a prophecy from the Lord concerning not only Jacob and his descendants, the Israelites but also Esau and his descendants, the Edomites.

Genesis 25:19-23

“Now these are the records of the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham became the father of Isaac; and Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, the sister of Laban the Aramean, to be his wife.”

“Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD answered him and Rebekah his wife conceived.”

“But the children struggled together within her; and she said, ‘If it is so, why then am I this way?’ So she went to inquire of the LORD.”

“The LORD said to her, ‘Two nations are in your womb; And two peoples will be separated from your body; And one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger.’”

The Lord’s prediction that “two peoples will be separated from your (Rebekah’s) body” indicates that Jacob and Esau would be separated, divided

and hostile towards one another and would have nothing in common.

The Lord's prediction that "one people shall be stronger than the other" refers to the fact that the Israelites, Jacob's descendants would prevail in history over the Edomites, Esau's descendants.

In Genesis 25:23, the Lord declares that the "older shall serve the younger" indicating that the younger son, Jacob would receive the inheritance and not Esau who was older.

Esau, the older, did not actually serve Jacob, his younger twin but rather Esau's descendants did (see 1 Samuel 14:47; 2 Samuel 8:14; 1 Kings 11:15-16; 22:47; 2 Kings 14:7).

This prophecy that "one people shall be stronger than the other; And the older shall serve the younger" indicates that the sovereign will of God has ordained the following: (1) Jacob to be in the Messianic line and not Esau. (2) Jacob would be the beneficiary of the divine promises enumerated in the Abrahamic Covenant and not Esau. (3) Jacob would receive his father's estate and not Esau.

In Genesis 27:39-40, Isaac prophesied about Esau and his descendants.

Genesis 27:39-40, "Then Isaac his father answered and said to him, 'Behold, away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling, and away from the dew of heaven from above. By your sword you shall live, and your brother you shall serve; But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck.'"

Since Isaac gave everything to Jacob, all he has to give Esau is an "antiblessing," which is a parody on Jacob's blessing and are also prophecies concerning the future of Esau's descendants who were the Edomites.

The antiblessing/prophecy "away from the fertility of the earth shall be your dwelling" means that Esau and his descendants would be denied the earth's fertility unlike Jacob and his descendants.

The antiblessing/prophecy "away from the dew of heaven from above" means that Esau and his descendants, the Edomites, would be denied dew, which plays such an essential role in the irrigation

of crops in Palestine. Therefore, we see that Esau's descendants, the Edomites, would not participate in the blessing of rich harvests as Jacob's descendants, the Israelites would and would live away from fertile places, which implies that his descendants would live in a dry and barren land-as Edom on the whole actually was.

The antiblessing/prophecy "by your sword you shall live" means that Esau's descendants, the Edomites, would live in continuous conflict, always having to defend themselves from their enemies. Edom appears as a militant nation throughout the Old Testament Scriptures (Numbers 20:18; 1 Samuel 14:47; 1 Kings 11:14-16; 2 Kings 14:7-10; Obadiah; Psalm 60:10-11).

The antiblessing/prophecy "your brother you shall serve" means that the descendants of Jacob, the Israelites would prevail over Esau's descendants, the Edomites. This prophecy is a confirmation of the prophecy that was given to Rebekah and is recorded in Genesis 25:23 that the "older (Esau) would serve the younger (Jacob)."

The prophecy "But it shall come about when you become restless, that you will break his yoke from your neck" means that the time would come when the Edomites would break free from Israel (See 1 Kings 11:14-15; 2 Kings 8:20-22). From the time of David, Edom was part of the Israelite empire but later regained its independence (See 2 Kings 8:20-22) but after the fall of Jerusalem, Edom took revenge on Judah (Obadiah; Psalm 137:7). Therefore, we can see that this prophecy of future freedom was in a sense a blessing and thus Esau was blessed as it says in Hebrews 11:20 that Isaac blessed not only Jacob but also Esau.

Hebrews 11:20, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come."

Like Jacob, both Esau's appearance and character is described for us in Scripture.

Genesis 25:27, "When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a peaceful man, living in tents."

Genesis 25:27 describes Esau as being a man "who was skilled in hunting wild game" and he is also described as a "man of the field," which refers to the fact that he searched for game by roaming

the territories situated outside cities and towns where wild animals roamed.

As Esau and Jacob grew up, their attitudes towards spiritual matters contrasted, with the former indifferent and the latter interested. Their contrasting attitudes regarding spiritual matters was manifested when Esau agreed to exchange his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of lentil stew according to Genesis 25:29-34. Therefore, Esau was not qualified to inherit the responsibilities attached to the Lord's covenant promises.

Genesis 25:29-33

"When Jacob had cooked stew, Esau came in from the field and he was famished; and Esau said to Jacob, 'Please let me have a swallow of that red stuff there, for I am famished.' Therefore his name was called Edom."

"But Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.'"

"Esau said, 'Behold, I am about to die; so of what use then is the birthright to me?'"

"And Jacob said, 'First swear to me'; so he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob."

"Sold" is the verb *makhar* (rk^m*) (maw-kar), which in context means, "to exchange" since Jacob did not give money to Esau but rather offered him the red lentil soup in "exchange" for the birthright.

Genesis 25:34, "Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew; and he ate and drank, and rose and went on his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright."

"Birthright" is the noun *b^ekhora* (hr*k)B+ (bek-o-raw), which refers to the rights of the first-born in a family (See Exodus 4:22).

The firstborn had a privileged status (See Genesis 43:33; 49:3) and the right of succession (2 Chronicles 21:3) and received a double portion of his father's inheritance (Deut. 21:17).

In the family of Abraham and Isaac, the birthright included the privilege of carrying on the line of Christ that would bring salvation and therefore blessing to the entire world.

"Despised" is the verb *bazah* (hz*B*) (baw-zaw), which means, "to the act of according little worth

to something, to undervalue something implying contempt."

Therefore, by exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup, Esau was demonstrating that he valued little his firstborn status in the family of Isaac, which involved inheriting the promises, privileges and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby expressed his contempt for the plan of God.

Jacob knew this and desired these things, thus demonstrating his spiritual discernment and that he was a believer. Since the birthright concerns the future, its value is appropriated by faith and so by exchanging his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup, Esau was demonstrating his unbelief in the promises contained in the Abrahamic Covenant and thereby forfeited the blessings of this covenant (Hebrews 12:16-17).

Hebrews 12:15-17

"See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal."

"For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears."

The selling of the birthright demonstrated that Esau was a *psuchikos*, "soulish" man and not a *pneumatikos*, "spiritual" man since he was expressing his dislike of the plan of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised."

God elected Jacob's descendants, the Israelites as the nation from which the Messiah would come into the world. However, Esau's descendants, the Edomites were rejected from being the chosen nation of God. This election of Israel and rejection of Edom is described in Malachi 1:2-3, which states, "Jacob have I loved but Esau I have hated."

Malachi 1:2-3, "I have loved you, says the LORD. But you say, 'How have You loved us?' 'Was not Esau Jacob's brother?' declares the LORD. 'Yet I have loved Jacob; but I have hated Esau, and I have made his mountains a desolation and appointed his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.'"

The terms "love" and "hate" are "anthropopathisms," meaning that the writer is ascribing the human emotion of personal love and hate to God, which He does "not" possess in order to explain God's choice of entering into a covenant relationship with Jacob rather than Esau and does "not" indicate one is saved and the other is not.

The verbs in the Hebrew translated "I have loved" and "I have hated" are in the perfect tense and therefore, express not only God's past relationship with Israel and Edom but also His historical and present dealings (in Malachi's day) with these peoples. Both Israel and Edom received judgment from God at the hands of the Babylonians in the sixth century B.C. (Jer. 27:2-8). However, God promised to restore Israel over and over again because of His covenant promises (Deut. 4:29-31; 30:1-10) but He condemned Edom to complete destruction, never to be restored (Jer. 49:7-22; Ezek. 35).

In Romans 9:13, Paul quotes Malachi 1:3 to demonstrate that God elected Jacob's descendants, the nation of Israel as His covenant people and He rejected the Edomites as His covenant people who were descendants of Esau.

Romans 9:10-13

"And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived twins by one man, our father Isaac."

"for though the twins were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God's purpose according to His choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls, it was said to her, 'THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.'"

"Just as it is written, 'JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.'"

In Romans 9-11, the apostle Paul discusses the future of the nation of Israel and teaches that God has temporarily set aside the nation at this time in history and will restore her in the future because she was elected by Him to be His covenant people. Therefore, when we see the statement "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" we must understand that Paul is not referring to individuals but rather to the nations which descended from Jacob (Israelites) and Esau (Edomites).

So the statement "Jacob I loved but Esau I hated" does "not" refer to the fact that Esau was not saved and Jacob was since that would imply that God hates sinners and elects some people to be saved and others to eternal condemnation, which contradicts the teaching of Scripture that God's will is for all men to be saved (See 1 Timothy 2:4, 4:10, 2 Peter 3:9, John 3:16-18, 1 John 2:2).

The statement "Jacob I loved but Esau I hated" is "not" a reference to Jacob and Esau as individuals but rather it is a reference to the nations, which descended from them, namely, the Israelites from Jacob and the Edomites from Esau. Therefore, the statement refers to the "national" election of Israel as God's covenant people who are descendants of Jacob and the rejection of the Edomites as His covenant people who were descendants of Esau.

The rejection of Esau's descendants as His covenant people does "not" mean that God elected the Edomites and the Gentiles to eternal condemnation and the Israelites to salvation since that would contradict the biblical doctrine of the unlimited atonement, which states that God desires all men to be saved.

The election of the nation of Israel, like the choice of Jacob over Esau was "non-meritorious" meaning that there was nothing that the nation of Israel and Jacob did that secured God choosing them since many times both sinned and failed to obey God.

Genesis 37

In the original Hebrew text, Genesis 37:1 is grammatically connected to Genesis 36 and completes the ninth major section of Genesis, which began in Genesis 36:1.

We must also remember that the original Hebrew and Greek texts did not have chapter divisions and were not inspired by God.

Genesis 37:1 is called a “colophon” meaning it is a note that comes at the end of a book, thus the statement regarding Jacob in Genesis 37:1 is simply a note that comes at the end of the ninth section in the book of Genesis.

Genesis 37:1

“Now Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan.”

The statement “Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan” is an unusual addition to the account of Esau’s descendants and is used in direct contrast with the statement contained in Genesis 36:8, “So Esau...settled in the hill country of Seir.”

Therefore, the statement “Jacob lived in the land where his father had sojourned, in the land of Canaan” is employed to demonstrate the geographical and spiritual division between Jacob and Esau and their descendants.

Genesis 37:1 is called a “Janus” section book, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after. Therefore, Genesis 37:1 looks back at Genesis 36 and the account of Esau’s descendants settling in Seir and looks forward to Jacob and his sons in the land of Canaan, thus this passage serves to contrast Jacob’s commitment to the land of Canaan with Esau’s migration to Mount Seir.

Genesis 37:2 begins the tenth and final section of the book of Genesis, which ends at Genesis 50:26. Genesis 37:2 presents to us the account of Jacob’s sons and Joseph giving his father Jacob a slanderous report of his brothers.

Genesis 37:2

“These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's

wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.”

“These are the records of the generations of Jacob” is the phrase *‘elleh tol’ dhoth ya`aqov* (hl#a@tw)dl+T) bq)u&y^), which introduces the tenth and final section to the book of Genesis, which ends in Genesis 50:26 and contains the account of Jacob’s family, and primarily deals with Joseph and Judah.

The account of Jacob’s family brings the book of Genesis to its climatic conclusion. This tenth book or section deals primarily with the transformation of Jacob’s sons under the care and protection of God.

There is a tendency to identify this last section of Genesis as the “story of Joseph,” but this is not technically accurate since Moses referred to Genesis 36 as the “records of the generations of Esau” (36:1, 9) and in Genesis 37:2 Moses entitled this section “the records of the generations of Jacob.”

We must not forget that Jacob will not pass off the scene until Genesis 49, where we find the account of his death and so in this last section, is an account of God’s working in the life of Jacob and of his sons through the instrumentality of Joseph. Joseph is certainly the central figure in these chapters, but he is not the only figure since God is forming a nation out of all the sons of Jacob and not just Joseph.

Joseph’s sojourn in Egypt and his ultimate elevation to the post of prime minister under Pharaoh makes possible the preservation of Jacob and his sons, as well as teaching all of them some valuable spiritual lessons.

Outline of the tenth section contained in Genesis 37:2-50:26: (I) Introduction to the dysfunctional family of Jacob (37:2-38:30) (A) Joseph rejected by his brothers and sold into slavery (37:2-36) (B) Judah sins against Tamar and has twins (38:1-30) (II) Joseph ascent to rulership in Egypt (39:1-41:57) (A) Joseph in Potiphar’s house (39:1-20) (B) Joseph in prison and the interpreter of dreams (39:21-40:23) (C) Joseph in the palace and second only to Pharaoh (41:1-57). (III) The dysfunctional family of Jacob reconciled (Genesis 42:1-46:27) (A) First journey: Joseph tests his brothers (42:1-

38) (B) Second journey: Joseph entertains his brothers (43:1-34) (C) The brothers tested and reconciled (44:1-45:15) (D) The reconciled family of Jacob migrates to Egypt (45:16-46:27) (IV) The family of Jacob blessed in Egypt looking for the Promised Land (Genesis 46:28-50:26) (A) Israel's arrival in Egypt (46:28-47:12) (B) Joseph's administration in Egypt during the famine (47:13-31) (C) Jacob's blessing on Joseph (48:1-22) (D) Israel's blessings for the twelve tribes (49:1-28) (E) Jacob's death in Egypt and burial in Canaan (49:29-50:21) (F) Joseph's death in Egypt and future burial in Canaan (50:22-26).

The account of Jacob's family begins in Canaan but ends in Egypt with the confident expectation of returning to Canaan as the Lord had promised them. This account between Canaan and Egypt is driven by conflict with family and authorities of power as illustrated by the following: (1) Genesis 37-38: The family of Jacob in conflict in Canaan (2) Genesis 39-41: Joseph in conflict with the imperial power of Egypt (3) Genesis 42-44: The family of Jacob in conflict in Canaan and Egypt (4) Genesis 45-47: The family of Jacob reconciled in Egypt (5) Genesis 48-50: The family of Jacob blessed in Egypt but looking in faith to Canaan.

This tenth and final section in the book of Genesis is characterized by striking symmetry containing nine pairings that point to the providence of God, which states that our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

Nine Pairings: (1) Joseph has two dreams (37:5-10) and two problems with his brothers (37:2-11; 12-36) (2) Tamar's successful seduction of Judah is followed by Potiphar's wife's unsuccessful seduction of Joseph (38:1-30; 39:1-23) (3) Joseph interprets two dreams of his prison mates (40:1-23) and two dreams of Pharaoh (41:1-40) (4) Joseph's brothers devise two plans to deal with him (37:21-27) and he devises two plans to deal with them (42:14-20) (5) Joseph's brothers make two trips to Egypt (42:1-38; 43:1-34) (6) Joseph's steward tests Joseph's brothers and then Joseph himself tests Judah (44:1-13, 14-34) (7) Narrator twice records Jacob's family's migration to Egypt (46:1-27; 46:28-47:12) (8) Jacob blesses Joseph and sons (48:1-22) and then all his sons (49:1-28) (9) Jacob dies (49:33-50:13) and Joseph dies (50:22-26).

As the account of Jacob's sons begins, we see Joseph and Judah are immature, however, through divine discipline the character of these men is developed and refined.

Hebrews 12:10, "He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

The narrator in Genesis 37:2-11 conveys to the reader three events that lead to Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers: (1) Joseph slanders his brothers (37:2) (2) Jacob gives Joseph a beautiful royal robe (37:3-4) (3) Joseph shares two dreams with his brothers (37:5-11).

The name "Joseph" ([s@w]y) (yoseph) literally means, "He adds," which is a play on the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*]), "to add" and is also a prayer for another child, foreshadowing the birth of Benjamin.

"Joseph" was the eleventh son of Jacob that was born in Paddan Aram and he was the first child that Rachel bore to Jacob according to Genesis 30:22-24.

Joseph's life is divided into three segments: (1) Birth to Seventeen Years of Age (Genesis 30:24-37:2) (2) Seventeen to Thirty Years of Age (Genesis 37:2-41:46) (3) Thirty Years to Death (Genesis 41:46-50:26).

It is interesting that Joseph lived the first seventeen years of his life with his father Jacob and Jacob lives with Joseph for the last seventeen years of his life (See Genesis 47:28), which reveals the providence of God in the lives of these two men.

"Was pasturing": (1) 3rd person masculine singular qal perfect form of the verb *hayah* (hy*h*), which means, "he used to be" (2) Masculine singular qal active participle form of the verb *ra`ah* (hu*r*) (raw-aw), which is used as a substantive (i.e. a noun), and means, "shepherd."

"With his brothers": (1) Preposition *eth* (ta@) (ayth), which denotes accompaniment and means, "together with" (2) Masculine singular (collective: designating Joseph's brothers through Leah as a group) noun *ach* (ja*) (awkh), "brothers."

"His brothers" refers to the sons of Jacob's primary wife Leah since the writer makes a distinction between these children and those of his

concubines, who are identified as “the sons of Zilpah” and “the sons of Bilhah.”

“His brothers” refers to Leah’s children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (See Genesis 29:31-35), Issachar, and Zebulun (See Genesis 30:14-21).

“The flock”: (1) Preposition *b^e* (B+) (beth), which denotes the location of Joseph’s job as a shepherd, which was “among” the flocks (2) Definite article *ha* (h[^]\), which means, “the” (3) Feminine singular noun *tso’n* (/aX) (tsone), which refers to sheep and goats and means, “flock.”

Therefore, Genesis 37:2b should be translated as follows: “Joseph, at seventeen years of age, was a shepherd among the flock, together with his brothers (the sons of Leah).”

This statement reveals that Joseph shared the same occupation with his half brothers whose mother was Leah, Jacob’s other primary wife.

“While he”: (1) Emphatic use of the conjunction *w^e* (W+) (waw), “and in fact” (2) Emphatic use of the personal pronoun *hu’* (aWh) (hoo), “he himself.”

“Youth” is the noun *na`ar* (ru[^]n[^]) (nah-ar), which refers in context to an undershepherd, or assistant shepherd who is inexperienced in the occupation and is therefore still learning.

“Along with” is the preposition *`eth*, which denotes accompaniment, thus indicating that Joseph was an assistant shepherd under the authority of his half-brothers through Leah “along with” his half-brothers through his father’s concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah.

“Zilpah” was Leah’s maid and Jacob’s concubine according to Genesis 30:9-13 and “Bilhah” was Rachel’s maid and Jacob’s concubine as well according to Genesis 30:1-7 and 35:22.

“The sons of Zilpah” were Gad and Asher (See Genesis 30:9-13) and “the sons of Bilhah” were Dan and Naphtali (See Genesis 30:1-8).

In the days of the patriarchs a concubine was considered a second-class wife, acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights (see Genesis 30:4; Judges 19:1-4). The people in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with

some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife so in effect Bilhah became Jacob’s concubine.

In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be divorced with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

Having a concubine was often a sign of wealth and was recognized as a status symbol and as we saw in our study of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16, men and their wives sought concubines when the wife could not bear children and so in these situations, wives presented their maidservants to their own husbands. As Genesis 22:24 records, children of a concubine were not viewed as illegitimate but were considered part of the family.

Therefore, Joseph was serving under Leah’s sons “along with” the sons of his father’s concubines, “the sons of Zilpah” and “the sons of Bilhah.”

Corrected translation of Genesis 37:2: “Joseph, at seventeen years of age, was a shepherd among the flock, together with his brothers and in fact he was an assistant (undershepherd) along with the sons of Bilhah and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s (secondary) wives.”

There is no evidence exegetically or contextually that would indicate as some commentators propose that Joseph was given authority by his father Jacob over his brothers.

The preposition *`eth*, which appears in the prepositional phrase “along with his brothers” is used to denote accompaniment and is never used in the Scriptures to denote authority “over” a person or thing. Furthermore, the noun *na`ar*, which is translated in the New American Standard as “youth” denotes someone who is inexperienced implying that Joseph was learning the occupation of being a shepherd.

The richly ornamented robe that Joseph received from his father Jacob did “not” indicate his authority over his brothers but rather simply expressed that Jacob favored Joseph over his

brothers and expressed his desire that Joseph be the future ruler of the family.

Even though Jacob's desire was for Joseph to rule the family eventually, Joseph was too immature and too inexperienced to be the chief shepherd over the family flocks and herds, not to mention to be head of the family since he was only seventeen years of age.

So it appears that Leah's sons were the keepers of the flock while Joseph was an undershepherd or an assistant shepherd along with the sons of his father's concubines. Together, Joseph and the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah were learning how to be shepherds from the sons of Jacob's primary wife Leah.

In fact, Joseph was closer in age to the sons of Jacob's concubines than he was to Leah's older sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.

Shepherding was perhaps the most common occupation in ancient Israel and was an integral part of family life in Israel.

The reason why Jacob put Joseph with the sons of his concubines was to protect Joseph from the jealousy of Leah's sons who resented Jacob favoring Joseph's mother Rachel over their mother Leah and his favoring Joseph over them.

As we have noted in detail in our studies of Genesis 29-30, Jacob favored Rachel over Leah and this favoritism produced resentment among the sons of Leah. If you recall, in our studies of Genesis 35:22, Reuben who was the first son that Leah bore to Jacob while in Paddan Aram committed adultery and incest with Jacob's concubine Leah, who was Rachel's maid, which was an act of rebellion against Jacob for favoring Rachel and Joseph over him and his mother Leah. This incident between Reuben and Jacob's concubine, Bilhah is motivated by Reuben's resentment of Jacob and his love for his mother Leah rather than sexual lust since by defiling Bilhah, he makes certain that with Rachel's death her maid cannot supplant Leah as chief wife (Compare 2 Samuel 15:16; 16:22; 20:3).

So we see that Jacob puts Joseph with the sons of his concubines rather than with Leah's sons even though he is the favorite son of his favorite wife

Rachel since he wants to protect Joseph from the jealousy of Leah's sons.

Furthermore, Jacob wanted to protect Joseph from the idolatry and immorality of Leah's sons since it appears that Simeon and Levi were involved in Canaanite immorality and idolatrous practices, which led to them being demonically influenced resulting in their brutally killing all the men of the city of Shechem.

The fact that Simeon and Levi were involved in the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites is implied by the text of Genesis 35:2-3 when Jacob commands his entire household to get rid of their foreign gods!

Deuteronomy 32:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:20 teach that the worship of idols is connected to the worship of demons since the sacrificing to idols is in reality sacrificing to demons who promote the worship of idols. Demonic "influence" has to do with demons influencing the human soul whereas demon "possession" has to do with demons indwelling the human body. The latter of which can only take place in an unbeliever since demons will never indwell the body of a believer since the believer's body is permanently indwelt by all three members of the Trinity (See Ephesians 4:5, Colossians 1:27, Romans 8:11). Simeon and Levi were demonically "influenced" and not "possessed" since they were believers.

This Canaanite influence upon Leah's sons is further revealed in Genesis 38, which records Judah's involvement with Canaanite immorality and his marriage to a Canaanite woman who rejected the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, Jacob puts Joseph with the sons of his concubines even though Joseph is his favorite son of his favorite wife Rachel in order to protect Joseph from the jealousy of the sons of his other primary wife Leah and their immoral conduct and idolatrous practices.

"Bad report": (1) Primary particle *`eth* (ta@), which is used to mark the noun *dibbah* as the direct object and is not translated (2) Feminine singular noun *dibbah* (hB*D!) (dib-baw), "slandorous report" (3) Adjective *ra`* (ur^)(rah), "evil."

The noun *dibbah* is derived from *davav* (bb^D*), which can have the following meanings depending upon the context in which it is used: (1) “to go slowly and gently” (2) “to creep about” and hence “to slander” (3) “to flow gently” or “drip.”

In Akkadian the word is a technical term for a “legal case” or “slander.” However, the Hebrew rarely uses this legal sense and in most cases the sense conveyed by the noun is a “negative report” or “a rumor.”

The noun *dibbah* appears nine times in the Old Testament (Gen. 37:2; Num. 13:32; 14:36, 37; Ps. 31:13; Prov. 10:18; 25:10; Jer. 20:10; Ezek. 36:3) and is always used in a negative sense of an untrue report about someone or something and when used with reference to people, the noun *dibbah* refers to defamation and slander.

Slander refers to defamation, which is publishing or speaking maliciously or falsely anything that would injure or harm a person’s reputation and so slander is a malicious, false, and defamatory statement or report. Joseph slandered his brothers meaning he reported to Jacob their father a malicious and false report that misrepresented his brothers to Jacob their father, thus, we can see the first reason why Joseph was hated by his brothers.

At seventeen years of age, the picture the Holy Spirit draws of Joseph is that of a spoiled brat and tattler who was involved with the sin of slander, which is evil. The adjective *ra`* modifies *dibbah* and describes Joseph’s report to his father as “evil.”

Based on their previous behavior in massacring the Shechemites (See Genesis 34) and involvement with Canaanite idolatry (See Genesis 35:2-3) and Canaanite immorality (See Genesis 38), it is likely that Joseph’s half-brothers were doing wrong from which Joseph should have rightly distanced himself. However, the Scriptures teach that he should have operated in love and drew a veil and concealed the transgression of his brothers.

1 Peter 4:8, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

Proverbs 10:12, “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.”

Proverbs 11:12, 13

“He who despises his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding keeps silent.”

“He who goes about as a talebearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals a matter.”

Proverbs 12:23, “A prudent man conceals knowledge, but the heart of fools proclaims folly.”

It appears that Joseph was very moral as manifested in his refusal to commit adultery with Potiphar’s wife (See Genesis 39:6-18) and his brothers were very immoral as manifested in Judah’s involvement with sexual immorality with Canaanite women (See Genesis 38). Therefore, it appears that Joseph was a “moral degenerate” and his brothers were “immoral degenerates” in the sense that Joseph spoke evil of his brothers for their immorality and thought because he was moral that he was superior to his brothers. So the picture we get of Joseph and his brothers is that Joseph was a “goody two shoes” whereas his brothers were “hell-raisers.”

In Genesis 37:3, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit employs the name “Israel” rather than “Jacob” in order to emphasize that the unfair treatment by Joseph’s brothers against him and his ending up in Egypt was a manifestation of the providence of God. The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

Genesis 37:3

“Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.”

The statement “Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age” not only expresses that Jacob favored Joseph over his other sons but also expresses that God sovereignly cared for all Jacob’s sons, which is indicated by the name “Israel,” which is divine in origin.

The name "Israel" was given to Jacob by the preincarnate Christ after their wrestling match at Peniel according to Genesis 32:28.

Genesis 32:28, "He (Preincarnate Christ) said, 'Your (Jacob) name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed.'"

"Israel" is the proper noun *yisra'el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, "one who fights and overcomes with the power of God" since the causal clause in Genesis 32:28, the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has overcome them (with the power of God).

The name "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and served as a perpetual reminder to Jacob to not depend upon his own power and ability but rather to depend and rely upon the power of God to deal with problems with people and adversities in life.

After Jacob's failure with his family at Shechem, the Lord reconfirmed this name change at Bethel according to Genesis 35:10 in order to reaffirm to Jacob His plan for his life and to impress upon Jacob the need to live his life in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his new name.

In Genesis 37:3, the name "Israel" emphasizes that God has control over the situation between Joseph and his brothers and has figured it into His plan since the name "Israel" is divine in origin and is used in the context of Joseph's brothers resenting him because Jacob their father favored Joseph over them.

God has figured into the divine decree so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself not only the resentment of Joseph's brothers towards him but also their selling him into slavery and Joseph ending upon in Egypt. The divine decree is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future (Psa. 2:7; 148:6; Dan. 9:24). Therefore, God rendered certain to take place that Joseph's brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery in Egypt and it was thus a part of God's plan.

God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist. Therefore, God rendered certain to occur that Joseph's brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery and that Joseph would end up in Egypt and God decided that these things would exist.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable will. Therefore, the fact that Joseph would be sold into slavery by his brothers due to their resentment of him because Jacob favored Joseph over them and the fact that Joseph would end up in Egypt, was part of God's plan for Jacob's family from eternity past.

The "providence" of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery and ended up in Egypt did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob's family and to bring glory to Himself.

God's sovereignty is expressed in the comprehensive plan or decree for world history. The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works. Therefore, the resentment of Joseph's brothers towards him and Joseph eventually being sold into slavery by them and ending up in Egypt was part of God's chosen and adopted plan for not only Joseph but his entire family.

The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. Therefore, the resentment of Joseph's brothers towards him and his being sold into slavery by them and ending up in Egypt was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His attribute of sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was

resented by his brothers and was sold into slavery by them and ended up in Egypt was the result of God's sovereign will and omniscience by which all these events were brought into being and were controlled and made subject to God's pleasure and glorified Him.

The "decree of God" is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity (i.e., that they will certainly take place). When I say "comprehending" I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by "determining" I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events. Therefore, the omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past that Joseph's brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery and that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. All history was yet future at the time of the divine decree. Therefore, the resentment of Joseph's brothers and selling him into slavery and Joseph ending up in Egypt was known by God in eternity past before anything was created and was sovereignly determined by God to take place at the time these events did.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. Therefore, it was God's eternal and immutable will that Joseph's brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery and that he would end up in Egypt and God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation. The will of God in relation to the divine decrees refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would

actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time. God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that Joseph would be resented by his brothers and sold into slavery by them and end up in Egypt and He decided that these events would take place in the exact time that they did.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice. In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the decisions of Joseph's brothers, Joseph and Jacob himself would all take place in time and even those by Joseph's brothers, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle our decisions. Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time the decisions that Jacob and his sons would make and decreed that those decisions would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle their decisions. Therefore, since the name "Israel" is divine in origin, it implies that the resentment towards Joseph by his brothers and Joseph being sold into slavery by them and his ending up in Egypt was a part of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place Joseph's brothers resenting him and selling him into slavery and that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

The name "Israel" implies that Joseph's brother's resentment of him and their selling him into

slavery and Joseph ending up in Egypt was figured into the divine decree and was a part of the providence of God, which is the outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory.

Genesis 45:5-8 records that after Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in Egypt, he told them that God sent him to Egypt in order to keep the family of Jacob alive in the sense that God decreed from eternity past that he would be sold into slavery and arrived in Egypt in order to fulfill God's will to preserve his family alive.

Genesis 45:1-8

"Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, 'Have everyone go out from me.' So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers."

"He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it."

"Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?' But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence."

"Then Joseph said to his brothers, 'Please come closer to me.' And they came closer. And he said, 'I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.'"

"Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life."

"For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting."

"God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance."

"Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt."

In Genesis 50:14-20, after Jacob died, Joseph's brothers were worried that he might exact revenge on them, Joseph reassured his brothers that it was God's plan for him to be sold into slavery and end

up in Egypt and suffer undeservedly in order to preserve their family.

Genesis 50:14-20

"After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father."

"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!'"

"So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father charged before he died, saying, thus you shall say to Joseph, 'Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong. And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.' And Joseph wept when they spoke to him."

"Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'"

"But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?'"

"As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

The statement "Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons" expresses that Jacob favored Joseph over his other sons since Joseph was the first son of Jacob's favorite wife Rachel who suffered many years of infertility before giving birth to him.

Jacob was very disappointed in the behavior of his three older sons whose mother was Leah since Genesis 34 records Simeon and Levi being the masterminds of the massacre at Shechem and Genesis 35:22 records Reuben, Jacob's oldest son as committing adultery and incest with his concubine, namely, Rachel's maid Bilhah.

Notice, that this statement "Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons" does "not" say that Israel did not love his other sons but rather that he loved Joseph "more" than them implying obviously that he "did" love his other sons but it was not as affectionate as his love for Joseph.

This statement echoes the statement found in Genesis 29:30, “So Jacob went in to Rachel also, and indeed he (Jacob) loved Rachel more than Leah, and he served with Laban for another seven years.”

Notice, also that this statement in Genesis 29:30, like the one in Genesis 37:3 does “not” say that Jacob did not love Leah but rather he loved Rachel “more” than Leah implying obviously that he “did” have love for Leah but it was not as passionate and affectionate as his love for Rachel.

The fact that Jacob favored Joseph over his other sons was wrong and actually fueled his sons’ hatred of Joseph. Favoritism had a long history in Jacob’s family such as Isaac’s preference for Esau and Rebekah’s for Jacob, and Jacob favoring Rachel over Leah.

As we have noted in detail in our studies of Genesis 29-30 and 37:2, Jacob favored Rachel over Leah, which produced resentment among the sons of Leah. If you recall, in our studies of Genesis 35:22, Reuben who was the first son that Leah bore to Jacob while in Paddan Aram committed adultery and incest with Jacob’s concubine Leah, who was Rachel’s maid, which was an act of rebellion against Jacob for favoring Rachel and Joseph over him and his mother Leah. This incident between Reuben and Jacob’s concubine, Bilhah is motivated by Reuben’s resentment of Jacob and his love for his mother Leah rather than sexual lust since by defiling Bilhah, he makes certain that with Rachel’s death her maid cannot supplant Leah as chief wife (Compare 2 Samuel 15:16; 16:22; 20:3).

Therefore, you would think that Jacob, now Israel would have learned his lesson to not play favorites since he was the victim of such favoritism and that his favoring Rachel over Leah produced problems in his home.

However, it appears that he has not learned his lesson and therefore, he will pay a huge price in that Joseph will be sold into slavery by his brothers and end up in Egypt and not see his father for over twenty years due to the fact that the sons of Leah resented that their father favored Joseph over them.

The fact that Jacob, now Israel favored Joseph over the sons of his concubines and Leah’s sons

does “not” excuse what Joseph’s brothers did to him in selling him into slavery.

The causal clause “because he (Joseph) was the son of his old age” reveals the primary reason why Israel preferred Joseph over his other sons and means that Joseph was the baby in the family even though Benjamin was born after him.

“Old age” is the noun *z^equnim* (<yn!q | z+) (zaw-koon), which is in the plural form expressing the condition of advanced age.

Joseph was born when Jacob, now Israel was 91 years of age and was the last of his sons born in Paddan Aram. The fact that Jacob was 91 years of age when Joseph was born is indicated by the following: Genesis 47:9 records that Jacob was 130 years old when he was reunited with Joseph and Genesis 41:46 records Joseph as 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt. Therefore, since Joseph became prime minister of Egypt at thirty and at the beginning of the seven years of prosperity, Joseph was 37 years of age at the end of these seven years of prosperity.

In Genesis 45:6, after reuniting with his brothers, Joseph mentions to his brothers that two years of famine had already transpired and that five more remained. Right after this conversation that Joseph had with his brothers, Jacob moved to Egypt and was reunited with Joseph according to Genesis 46. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was 37 after the seven years of prosperity and that he met his father after two years of famine indicates that Joseph was 39 years of age when he was reunited with his father Jacob and his brothers during the seven years of famine.

So if Joseph was 39 years of age when he was reunited with his father Jacob and became prime minister at 30 and was sold into slavery at 17, then Joseph was in Egypt for 22 years when he was reunited with his father Jacob. Furthermore, since Jacob was 130 years old and Joseph was 39 years of age when they were reunited, then Jacob was 91 years old when Joseph was born.

The noun *z^equnim* (<yn!q | z+) (zaw-koon), “old age” is used in Genesis 44:20 to describe Jacob’s relationship to Benjamin.

Therefore, in Genesis 37:3, the term does “not” refer to the spiritual superiority of Joseph over his

brothers as some commentators contend meaning that he was a “wise son” or was wise beyond his years since the term is also used of Jacob’s relationship to Benjamin. This interpretation is further confirmed in that Joseph did “not” demonstrate much wisdom by giving his father a slanderous report concerning his brothers, nor does he demonstrate much wisdom by bragging about his two dreams, which reveal that he would rule over his brothers. Therefore, it is clear that at this point in his life, Joseph was “not” superior to his brothers in wisdom, however, he did receive revelation from God through the two dreams and so in that sense he was blessed, not superior since his brothers did not receive any revelations from God in a dream.

The statement “because he (Joseph) was the son of his (Israel’s) old age” implies that Joseph was spoiled by his father because Joseph was born in his old age and also was the firstborn son of his favorite wife Rachel.

Israel expresses his love for Joseph and that he favors him over his others sons by making for him a *k^lthoneth passim*, which the New American Standard translates “a varicolored tunic.”

The King James translates this Hebrew expression “a coat of many colours,” while the NIV renders it, “a richly ornamented robe” and the RSV calls it, “a long robe with sleeves.” The Message Bible translates this Hebrew expression “an elaborately embroidered coat” while the Amplified Bible renders it “a [distinctive] long tunic with sleeves.”

“Varicolored tunic” is composed of the feminine singular form of the noun *kuttoneth* (tn#T)K |) (koot-to-neth), which means, “tunic” and the masculine plural form of the noun *pas* (sP^) (pas), which means, “long tunic with long sleeves.”

The only other place in the Old Testament that the expression *k^lthoneth passim* appears is in 2 Samuel 13:18-19 where it is mentioned as the distinctive dress of virgin daughters of royalty as the one worn by King David’s virgin daughter Tamar.

2 Samuel 13:18, 19

“Now she had on a long-sleeved garment; for in this manner the virgin daughters of the king

dressed themselves in robes. Then his attendant took her out and locked the door behind her.”

“Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment which was on her; and she put her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.”

The noun *kuttoneth* means, “tunic,” which was the basic garment in the ancient world, the equivalent of the modern slacks and shirt. There is considerable disagreement as to how *pas* should be translated since some say it refers to the color and ornamentation of the garments and others say it refers to the length of the garments. Many translations follow the Targums (Aramaic translations of Hebrew Old Testament), Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) and Vulgate (Latin translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and Greek New Testament) by translating the word “coat of many colors.” Others follow the Midrashic (Exegetical and Commentaries of the Hebrew Old Testament) translation “coat with long sleeves” by supposing *pas* means, “flat of hand or foot.”

In Aramaic and Rabbinic Hebrew *pas* means, “the palm of the hand and the sole of the foot.” Therefore, it appears that this tunic extended to the wrists and ankles of a person, which is significant since men in the days of the patriarchs did not work in long sleeves but rather in short sleeves while those in long sleeves were the overseers or employers of those in short sleeves.

The etymology *kuttoneth* and *pas* does “not” appear to indicate that the coat that Jacob gave to Joseph was multicolored. However, the passion for various colours was popular among people of the Middle East in the days of the patriarchs as it still is today among the Arabs and the country people of the Middle East, who are fond of dressing their children in this gaudy attire. But since the art of interweaving various patterns was introduced, “the coats of colors” are different now from what they seem to have been in patriarchal times, and bear a close resemblance to the varieties of tartan.

This *k^lthoneth passim*, “long sleeved robe” was a mark of distinction indicating exemption from labor which was the peculiar privilege of a king or a prince. Therefore, Joseph’s brothers resented

him because this long sleeved robe marked him as exempt from work and expressed Israel's desire that Joseph rule over his brothers. So while this long sleeved coat exempted Joseph from work, his brothers were in short sleeves working, which led of course to their resenting Joseph.

The *k'thoneth passim*, "long sleeved robe" would express publicly Israel's desire to give Joseph the family birthright, which he received according to 1 Chronicles 5:2. This long sleeved robe signified publicly that Israel favored Joseph over his other sons and would express publicly Israel's desire that Joseph succeed him as the ruler of the family. Therefore, this long sleeved garment expressed publicly Israel's rejection of Reuben in receiving the birthright as a result of committing adultery and incest with his concubine Bilhah as well as his rejection of Simeon and Levi as well for being the ringleaders in the massacre of Shechem.

Up to this point in the narrative we have seen two elements that contribute to Joseph's brothers resenting him: (1) In Genesis 37:2, Joseph's slanders his brothers to his father. (2) In Genesis 37:3, Israel gives Joseph a long sleeved robe, which marks him out to be the future possessor of the birthright and ruler of the family.

Genesis 37:4

"His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms."

Genesis 37:4 records Joseph's brothers' reaction to their father favoring Joseph over them and giving Joseph preferential treatment.

John Schultz, "The reaction of Joseph's brothers to the love Jacob bestows upon them is hatred for Joseph. Joseph ultimately suffers more from his father's love than he benefits from it. The attitude of the other sons indicates that they craved for love from their father, which they did not receive. There must have been an immense amount of strife and jealousy in the family. The tension between the two sisters carried over to their sons. Leah's sons must have prided themselves on the fact that they were the sons of Jacob's actual wife. Everybody must have looked down upon the boys of the slave girls. But the hatred toward Joseph

surpasses every other feeling. It probably gave a sense of unity between them, as a common enemy usually does" (Genesis, page 165).

"They hated" is the verb *sane* (an@c*) (saw-nay), which expresses an emotional attitude toward someone or something, which is abhorred, disdained or opposed and which desires to have no relationship or amiable reconciliation.

Therefore, Joseph's brothers possessed in their souls an emotional attitude toward him, in which they abhorred, disdained or opposed him and desired to have no relationship with him or amiable reconciliation with him.

In Genesis 37:5-11, we will see Joseph having two prophetic dreams, which he relates to his brothers resulting in their plotting to kill Joseph but instead sell him into slavery.

Genesis 37:5

"Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."

Genesis 37:6-7

"He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.'"

Genesis 37:8

"Then his brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

Genesis 37:9

"Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, 'Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'"

Genesis 37:10

"He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually

come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?””

Genesis 37:11

“His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.”

In the days of the patriarchs, dreams were a common means of divine communication and were of a prophetic nature, which Joseph’s brothers would be well aware of. Joseph’s dream was a revelation from God and was prophetic in nature, revealing to Joseph not only his future but those of his brothers and father. However, Joseph and his brothers, and his father did not grasp the significance of the dream until all the elements of the dream were fulfilled in time.

This is the fifth dream we have seen thus far in our studies of the book of Genesis (Abimelech-Genesis 20; Jacob-Genesis 28:12-15; Jacob-Genesis 31:10-12; Laban-Genesis 31:24). In each of these four dreams, God spoke audibly to Abimelech, Jacob twice and Laban, however, God never speaks to Joseph in his dream and so his dream is the first in which God never speaks.

The dreams of Abimelech, Jacob and Laban were theophanies or Christophanies, which are theological terms used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem.

In Abimelech’s dream, he received an auditory manifestation of the Son of God whereas Jacob received in his dream at Bethel both a visible and auditory manifestation of the Son of God and in his last dream, Jacob received only an auditory manifestation. Therefore, Joseph’s dream forms a transition in the primary means by which God communicated with men from theophanies, which appear in Genesis 1-36 to divine providence as manifested in Genesis 37-50.

The fact that Joseph receives this divine revelation in a dream at the beginning of the story of his being sold into slavery by his brothers and ending up in Egypt reveals these things were decreed by God in eternity past so as to raise up the nation of Israel to represent Him and to bring the Savior into the world and to glorify Himself. This dream at the beginning of Joseph’s ordeal reveal that God was in control of Joseph’s circumstances and that his

being sold into slavery by his brothers and ending up in Egypt were due to the providence of God.

The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, Joseph’s two dreams, which appear in Genesis 37:5-11, are a revelation of God’s sovereign will for Joseph and his entire family.

Joseph’s two dreams, which are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11, predict his own career and the arrival of his entire family in Egypt to buy food and bow down to him as the prime minister of Egypt. Both dreams speak of his family being under his authority at some point in the future, which was fulfilled when Joseph became prime minister of Egypt and his brothers unknowingly bowing down to him.

The doubling of the dream emphasizes that Joseph’s family will indeed bow down to Joseph and that the matter is firmly decided by God and will come to pass. An isolated dream might be misinterpreted but two dreams with the same meaning confirm the interpretation.

Also, these dreams, which contain revelation from God about the future of Joseph’s family and himself served as a great encouragement to Joseph while he was incarcerated for thirteen years in Egypt. In our day and age, the Scriptures, which are revelation from God concerning our future (See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), serve as encouragement to us when we go through adversity and underserved suffering in our lives.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

The revelation from God that Joseph received in his two dreams constituted the “Word of God” for him whereas here in the church age, the Word of God appears in the original languages of Scripture.

Genesis 37:5

“Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.”

In the Hebrew text, the statement “they hated him even more” literally means, “They added more to their hate of him” and is a play on Joseph’s name, which means, “He adds” revealing God’s sovereign control over the life of Joseph. The hatred and resentment of his brothers towards Joseph, the favoritism of his father towards him, Joseph telling of the dreams to his brothers and father, as well as his being sold into slavery and ending up in Egypt did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob’s family and to bring glory to Himself. In eternity past, God not only figured the hatred and resentment of Joseph’s brothers towards him as well as his father favoring him over his brothers but also He figured Joseph’s bad decision to tell his dreams to his brothers.

Up to this point in the narrative we have seen three elements that contribute to Joseph’s brothers resenting him: (1) In Genesis 37:2, Joseph’s slanders his brothers to his father. (2) In Genesis 37:3, Israel gives Joseph a long sleeved robe, which marks him out to be the future possessor of the birthright and ruler of the family. (3) Joseph’s two prophetic dreams that appear in Genesis 35:5-11.

“They hated” in both Genesis 37:4 and 5 is the verb *sane* (אנ@C*) (saw-nay), which expresses an emotional attitude toward someone or something, which is abhorred, disdained or opposed and which desires to have no relationship or amiable reconciliation. Therefore, Joseph’s brothers possessed in their souls an emotional attitude toward him, in which they abhorred, disdained or opposed him and desired to have no relationship with him or amiable reconciliation with him.

Joseph’s brothers are following in the footsteps of Cain who hated his brother Abel because the Lord accepted Abel’s blood offering and rejected his grain offering and then acted on that hate by murdering his brother Abel.

1 John 3:11, 12

“For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.”

“not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous.”

The apostle John teaches in 1 John 2:9-11 that the believer who hates his fellow believer is out of fellowship and is living according to the standards of the cosmic system of Satan, which is disobedience and hate.

1 John 2:9-11

“The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now.”

“The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.”

“But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.”

Love and hate are absolutes meaning you either love your fellow believer by obeying the Lord’s command to love one another or you hate your fellow believer by disobeying this command.

John 13:34, “A new commandment in character and quality I give to all of you, that all of you divinely love one another, even as I have divinely loved all of you, that all of you also divinely love one another.”

Therefore, since love and hate are absolutes, when love is absent, hate is present and love unexpressed is not love at all.

The “active” form of hate is expressed by unjustifiable hostility and antagonism towards one’s fellow believer, which expresses itself in malicious words and actions whereas the “passive” form of hate is manifested by coldness, by isolation, by exclusion, unconcern for your fellow believer.

There are two reasons why believers have the capacity to hate one another: (1) Presence of the sin nature in every believer, which produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin and hate (See Romans 5:12-19; Galatians 5:19-21; James 4:1-3). (2) They are deceived by Satan’s cosmic system (James 4:4).

The cosmic system of Satan is a vast system and arrangement of human affairs, earthly goods, godless governments, conflicts, riches, pleasures, culture, education, world religions, the cults and the occult dominated and negatively affected by Satan who is god of this satanic cosmos. This system is promoted by Satan, conformed to his ideals, aims, methods, and character, and stands perpetually in opposition to the cause of Christ and is used to seduce men away from the person of Christ.

Saul's hatred of David is an example of the active form of hate that is possible among believers (1 Sam. 18-20). The Lord Jesus Christ was the object of both the passive form of hate in that He was deserted by His disciples and friends at the most difficult moment in His life and He was the object of the active form of hate in that His enemies crucified Him. Paul experienced being the object of both the passive and active form of hate from other believers (See 2 Timothy 4:9-18).

Therefore, in Genesis 37:4, Joseph is the object of the "passive" form of hate at the hands of his brothers, which is expressed by the statement "they...could not speak to him on friendly terms." Then, in Genesis 37:18-36, Joseph is the object of the "active" form of hate at the hands of his brothers when they threw him into a pit and threatened to murder him but then decided to sell him into slavery.

Genesis 37:5

"Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."

"They hated" means that Joseph's brothers possessed in their souls an emotional attitude toward him, in which they abhorred, disdained or opposed him and desired to have no relationship with him or amiable reconciliation with him.

The statement "he (Joseph) told it to his brothers" implies that Joseph is bragging about this dream since in context, Joseph has already slandered his brothers to his father revealing a rivalry between Joseph and his brothers. Also, indicating that Joseph is bragging here is that Joseph obviously knew that his brothers resented him already for their father favoring him over them and so to relate this dream to them would only serve to

antagonize his brothers further. Therefore, Joseph's boasting about the two prophetic dreams was a sin on his part and contributed to his being sold into slavery by his brothers and then finally ending up in Egypt.

Joseph's proud boasting of the dreams reveals his immaturity and is in direct contrast to his father's reaction to the dreams, which is silent meditation upon them as recorded in Genesis 37:11. The divine revelation that Joseph received from God in two dreams was given to him by God for his own edification and encouragement that God had a plan for his life and not so he could brag and intimidate his family.

The fact that these two dreams that Joseph had came to pass reveals that they were from God, however, Joseph's use of this divine revelation was not ordained by God.

Genesis 37:6-7

"He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.'"

The phrase "Please listen" and "behold" express Joseph's excitement as a result of receiving not only divine revelation in a dream but also that God has ordained for him to rule over his brothers, which will not take place until he is taught humility.

Genesis 37:6-7 records Joseph's first dream and was "agricultural" as indicated the binding of sheaves, which foreshadows the context in which Joseph's brothers would bow down to him. While he was prime minister of Egypt, Joseph's brothers bowed down to honor him and not knowing it was Joseph and they did so in order to purchase grain to keep from starving due to the seven year famine that covered the entire earth. Genesis 42:1-3 records ten of Joseph's brothers bowing down to him while he was prime minister in Egypt in order to purchase grain from him due to the great famine that covered the entire earth at that time for seven years.

In fact, the first dream/prophecy recorded in Genesis 37:6-7 was fulfilled in stages: (1) Joseph's

brothers bowed once to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 42:6). (2) Joseph's brothers bowed down twice to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 43:26, 28). (3) Joseph's brothers throw themselves at Joseph's feet (See Genesis 50:18).

Genesis 37:8

“Then his brothers said to him, ‘Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?’ So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.”

Joseph's brothers understood clearly the meaning of the dream that Joseph would one day rule over them and they resented him even more than they already did. The two rhetorical questions put forth by Joseph's brothers express their sarcasm and contempt for Joseph. Indirectly and unknowingly, Joseph's brothers oppose the sovereign will of God since it was God the Holy Spirit who had given Joseph this revelation concerning his future and that of his father and brothers.

The terms “reign” and “rule” indicate that Joseph's brothers understood his dream to mean that Joseph would reign over them as a monarch and would have dominion and rule over them. This was fulfilled when Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt and ruled the entire world with the exception of Pharaoh (See Genesis 41:38-44; 45:8-26; Deuteronomy 33:16).

Furthermore, Joseph's first dream reveals that God has chosen Joseph to receive the birthright meaning the rights of the firstborn and would receive the double portion of the inheritance since Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons (See Genesis 48:5).

The statement “So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words” is the third time in this passage that Joseph's brothers were said to have hated him and indicates the intensity of hostile emotions towards Joseph was increasing.

The plural “dreams” appears rather than the singular “dream,” which appears to be odd since up to his point in the narrative Joseph has related only one dream, however, the word is used in the plural because it is an “abstract” noun signifying the sleeping state of Joseph when receiving divine revelation.

The term “words” is the noun *davar* (rb*D*) (daw-var), which refers to the “content” of the dream since the word denotes “that which is spoken,” thus negating any idea that it refers to the “manner” in which Joseph communicated the dream.

Joseph's brothers did not hate him because of the way he communicated the dream to them but simply because of the content of the dream itself, which conveyed to them that Joseph their baby brother would rule over them.

Genesis 37:9

“Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, ‘Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’”

Where the first dream was “agricultural,” the second, which appears in Genesis 37:9 is “celestial” and emphasizes the idea that is expressed in the first dream. In the ancient world, astrological symbols such as the sun, moon and stars represented rulers and so therefore, Joseph's second dream anticipated the elevation of Joseph as ruler over his entire family, which took place when he became prime minister and his family came under his authority.

The “sun” refers to Jacob, now Israel and the “moon” refers to Leah and not Rachel since the latter died while giving birth to Benjamin after Jacob left Bethel according to Genesis 35:19. Rachel died when Joseph was six or seven years of age and the fact that he had this dream at seventeen years of age indicates clearly that she was already dead when Jacob lived in Hebron where Isaac his father sojourned according to a comparison of Genesis 37:1 with Genesis 35:27.

The “eleven stars” refers to Joseph's brothers who would be Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, and Benjamin.

This same image appears in Revelation 12:1 with the only difference being that in Joseph's dreams there were eleven stars whereas in Revelation 12:1 there are twelve since Joseph is included among the stars in John's vision.

Revelation 12:1, “A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”

The “sun” represents Jacob and the “moon” represents Rachel and Leah and the “crown of twelve stars” represents the 12 tribes of Israel that descended from Jacob’s twelve sons. The “woman” represents the nation of Israel and the child represents the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis 37:10

“He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?’”

Jacob rebukes Joseph for his dream since he is said to have bowed down also to Joseph, which initially appeared to Joseph as an attack upon his authority as the father of the family. Jacob’s rhetorical question expresses his disgust and that he initially did not consider Joseph’s dream as revelation from God but rather the boasting of a spoiled little brat.

Joseph’s brothers remain silent here because their father’s rebuke is sufficient for them. Joseph’s brothers must have loved for him to be rebuked by their father and taking their side since Joseph was their father’s favorite.

“Your mother” refers to Leah since Rachel was dead at this point in Joseph’s life, which must have pleased Leah’s sons since Jacob favored Rachel over Leah while Rachel was alive.

Genesis 37:11

“His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind.”

“Jealous” is the verb *qana* (אנ*ק*) (kaw-naw), which is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.

Joseph’s brothers were jealous of Joseph in the sense that they desired the position that God had

ordained for Joseph in the dream. They were resentful and intolerant and suspicious of Joseph and his success that was prophesied of him in Joseph’s dream. They were also guarded over their position as the older brothers of Joseph and did not tolerate Joseph and considered him a rival.

Jealousy originated in eternity past with Satan since he was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ’s relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic since it is Satanic viewpoint.

Joseph’s brothers were under Satanic influence by being jealousy towards Joseph since jealousy is demonic in origin.

James 3:13-16

“Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.”

“But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth.”

“This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.”

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing.”

Envy is also included in the list of sins produced by the old sin nature in both the believer and unbeliever (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1). Jealousy leads to murder (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:20).

The jealousy of Joseph’s brothers towards him expressed itself when they plotted his murder and by selling him into slavery.

The fact that Jacob is recorded as having kept Joseph’s dream in his mind indicates that he did not discount what Joseph related to him since God had communicated His will to Jacob in the past by means of dreams.

In Genesis 37:12-24, we will see Joseph’s brothers attempting to kill Joseph but are restrained by Reuben who suggests an alternative plan to throw Joseph into a cistern and let him die by natural causes. However, Reuben’s real intent was to buy time so he could deliver Joseph at a more

opportune moment when his brothers were not around.

Genesis 37:12

“Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem.”

Genesis 37:13

“Israel said to Joseph, ‘Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.’ And he said to him, ‘I will go.’”

“Shechem” is approximately thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem and fifty miles north of Hebron, directly west of the Jabbok River and approximately twenty miles from the Jordan in the land of Canaan.

Just a few years before, Shechem was the site of one of the darkest days in the history of the nation of Israel for it was the place where Simeon and Levi and their servants killed Shechem, his father Hamor and all men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for Shechem raping their sister Dinah (See Genesis 33:18-34:31).

Jacob owned land in Shechem since Genesis 33:19 records that Jacob purchased a tract of land just outside the city of Shechem from Hamor, Shechem's father for one hundred pieces of money.

Since Shechem was approximately fifty miles north of Hebron, this would be quite a journey for Israel's sons to travel to feed the family flocks. However, it was not uncommon for shepherds to lead their flocks many miles from home in search of pasture. In fact, it is still common for Bedouin shepherds in that land to move northward as the summer progresses since there is more rain and better water supply the further north one travels.

Even so, it does “not” make good sense that Israel's sons would go near Shechem since the massacre of that city had only taken place a few years before and God had to intervene and protected them from being attacked by the Canaanites and the Perizzites (See Genesis 35:5).

Even though Israel owned land in Shechem, he could “not” have agreed to this trip by his sons to Shechem since Genesis 34:30 records that Israel

feared that the Canaanites and Perizzites would attack his family in retaliation for his sons killing all the men of Shechem. Therefore, the idea to go to Shechem had to originate with Israel's sons, which is further indicated in that Israel voices his concern to Joseph about the safety of his sons and thus, sends Joseph.

Also, it is implied that Israel's sons had sent word to Israel that they were at Shechem since Israel himself did not send them to Shechem but rather the visit to Shechem originated with Israel's sons.

Israel's sons went to Shechem even though they knew that their father feared retaliation from the Canaanites and Perizzites because they were attempting to get back at their father for the long sleeve colorful coat that he gave to Joseph, which symbolized his desire to bestow the birthright upon Joseph rather than on one of them.

Furthermore, Israel's sons would not be afraid of this trip to Shechem and in particular Simeon and Levi would be embolden and would not fear the Canaanites and Perizzites since they easily dispatched with the Hivites in Shechem.

The name “Israel” is used rather than “Jacob” emphasizing that the plot to kill Joseph and the selling of him into slavery by his brothers as well as Joseph ending up in Egypt as prime minister was according to the plan of God.

Since the name “Israel” is divine in origin, it implies that Joseph's brothers plot to kill him and his being sold into slavery by them and his ending up in Egypt as prime minister was a part of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The name “Israel” implies that the events in the life of Israel's sons were figured into the divine decree and was a part of the providence of God, which is the outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory.

The statement “I will go” expresses Joseph's obedient response to his father's command to check to see if his brothers are safe in Shechem, and which obedience reveals another reason why Joseph was Israel's favorite.

The responsibility of Christian children to their parents is obedience to their commands.

Colossians 3:20, “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.”

Genesis 37:14

“Then he said to him, ‘Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.’ So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem.”

“Welfare” is the noun *shalom* (<WLV^>) (shaw-loom), which in context means, “safety” indicating that Israel was concerned about the “safety” of his sons and his flocks they were shepherding in the area of Shechem.

Israel’s concern for the welfare of his family and his flocks was not without foundation since as we noted earlier, Shechem was the city where Israel’s sons massacred the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah. In fact, Genesis 34:30 records Israel’s concern for the safety of his family after the massacre of Shechem where he communicates to Simeon and Levi his fear that inhabitants of Canaan would get wind of the massacre of Shechem and then retaliate against Israel’s family.

The fact that Israel sent his beloved Joseph emphasizes that Israel was very concerned and feared for the safety of his sons and flocks since he would never risk the safety of his beloved Joseph unless it was for good reason. At this point in the narrative, Israel was residing in “the valley of Hebron,” which was just outside of the city of Hebron since the city of Hebron is located 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area filled with ancient oaks called terebinth trees. “Hebron” was located fifty miles south of Shechem, which is approximately a two day journey.

Genesis 37:15

“A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, ‘What are you looking for?’”

Genesis 37:16

“He said, ‘I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing the flock.’”

Genesis 37:17

“Then the man said, ‘They have moved from here; for I heard them say, ‘Let us go to Dothan.’ So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.”

This scene where Joseph gets lost in the wilderness keeps the reader in suspense by delaying the confrontation of Joseph with his brothers and by heightening our awareness of the danger Joseph faces so far removed from his father Israel.

The appearance of an unidentified man is another manifestation of the providence of God, which expresses the fact that this was not an accident that this unidentified man came along to help Joseph but rather was a part of God’s eternal plan.

“Dothan” is the proper noun *dothan* (/t*D)) (do-thawn), which means, “two wells” and is approximately fifteen miles north of Shechem and is located on a hill surrounded by a flat, fertile valley and is known for its rich pastureland. It is interesting that even today shepherds from the Hebron area still come to Dothan to take advantage of the great water supply as well as well as caravans and camel trains.

Beginning in Genesis 37:18, the scene shifts to the encampment of Joseph’s brothers and views things from their perspective and enables the reader to eavesdrop on their conversation.

Genesis 37:18

“When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death.”

Genesis 37:19

“They said to one another, ‘Here comes this dreamer!’”

Genesis 37:20

“Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, ‘A wild beast devoured him.’ Then let us see what will become of his dreams!”

Joseph's brothers could see him coming from a distance because of the distinctive long sleeved colorful coat he was wearing that was given to him by their father, which in turn reminded them of Joseph's dreams. Notice that it doesn't take long for Joseph's brothers to decide to kill him indicating that they had been thinking about the idea for quite some time.

"They plotted against" is the verb *nakhal* (lk[^]n*) (naw-kal), which means, "to conspire against" someone. To conspire against someone is to "agree together, especially secretly to do something wrong, evil or illegal" and the word "conspiracy" refers to an "evil, unlawful, treacherous or surreptitious plan formulated in secret by two or more persons." Therefore, the verb *nakhal* indicates that Joseph's brothers with the exception of Benjamin, Reuben and Judah agreed together in secret to murder Joseph.

The statement "Here comes this dreamer" in the Hebrew text literally means, "the lord of the dreams." To be the "lord" of something means that you are an expert or a specialist in a particular area of endeavor. Therefore, Joseph's brothers mock him by identifying him as "this master-dreamer" or in other words, Joseph who in his dreams is master over his brothers.

The statement "this master-dreamer" is sarcastic, contemptuous mockery of the dreams God gave to Joseph indicating that his brothers had decided to prove his dreams were fantasy by killing him and that they considered Joseph good for nothing else but dreaming.

"Kill" is the verb *haragh* (gr[^]h*) (haw-rag), which is used in a technical legal sense of murdering someone by violence.

The Word of God prohibits murder according to Exodus 20:13 and is one of the sins that God hates according to Proverbs 6:16-19 and according to Genesis 9:6 is to be punished through capital punishment.

Joseph's brothers become bold and conspire to kill him because their father is not around to restrain them and they have murdered before when they killed all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah. Joseph's brothers conspired to murder him and

then throw his body down into one of the cisterns, which caught the runoff from the rains and were commonly located at the bottom of the hills.

Archaeologists have found a large number of cisterns all over Israel, which are bottle shaped pits hewn out of rock for retaining water and range from 6 to 20 feet in depth.

Undoubtedly, Simeon and Levi are the master minds behind this plan since they were the master minds of the massacre at Shechem and they were the older sons of Leah, who held the greatest resentment of Joseph since Jacob favored Joseph's mother Rachel over Leah.

Genesis 37:21

"But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, 'Let us not take his life.'"

Genesis 37:22

"Reuben further said to them, 'Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him' -- that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father."

Genesis 37:23-24

"So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it."

The verbs "stripped," "took," and "threw" conveys the speed and roughness of the brothers' assault on Joseph. Joseph's brothers immediately strip off his long sleeved colorful coat that their father gave him, which symbolized their father's desire to give the birthright to Joseph rather than them and for Joseph to rule the family.

The fact that Leah's oldest son Reuben attempts to stop this plot to murder Joseph clearly indicates that he was not a part of the conspiracy.

The statement "Let us not take his life" is an inaccurate translation but rather should be translated "we will emphatically not take his life."

Reuben orders his brothers to not shed Joseph's blood but rather throw him into a cistern and let nature do him in, which had some definite

advantages, and so the plan was agreed to. By exerting his authority as the oldest brother in the family and ordering that Joseph not be killed and ordering instead that he be thrown into the pit, Reuben was apparently seeking to buy some time, intending to rescue Joseph and return him back home to the safety of their father when the others were not around.

Therefore, Reuben in effect saves Joseph's life since if he was not there to stop his brothers, they would have murdered Joseph, which again is another manifestation of the providence of God in the life of Joseph.

Reuben hid his motives for having Joseph thrown into a pit rather than murdered because he feared his brothers would not listen to him, which reveals that his younger brothers did not respect him.

Even so Reuben should have dealt with his brothers more forcefully and never should have suggested a compromise solution by throwing Joseph into the pit, but rather should have emphatically stated that Joseph would not be killed. Reuben's attempt to solve this problem with cunning and a crafty scheme rather than a more forward honest approach backfires on him since when his back is turned his brothers sell Joseph into slavery. However, it is very commendable that Reuben at least made this attempt since he of all the brothers should have resented Joseph the most since he was the oldest and was rejected by his father for committing incest with his concubine Bilhah.

Joseph undoubtedly realized that Reuben was trying to save him and years later he indicated he remembered Reuben's actions by holding Simeon, the next oldest of the sons rather than Reuben, captive in prison (See Genesis 42:24).

The statement "now the pit was empty" explains why Joseph did not drown when he was thrown into the cistern.

We can just imagine Joseph advancing towards his brothers, totally unsuspecting of their fierce resentment and hatred towards him and how astonished and terrified he must have been at their fierce and brutal treatment. Genesis 42:21 records that Joseph was greatly distressed in his soul and

pleaded for mercy with his brothers to not throw him into the pit and to not sell him into slavery.

Genesis 37:25-28 records Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery.

Genesis 37:25

"Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt."

Genesis 37:25 records that Joseph's brothers had a meal together after they threw Joseph into the empty cistern and Genesis 42:21 records that Joseph was filled with fear and pleaded with his brothers while they ate their meal together. Therefore, we can see from a comparison of Genesis 37:25 with Genesis 42:21 reveal the cold, insensitive and indifferent attitude of Joseph's brothers towards him, which was a manifestation of the "passive" form of hate.

The "active" form of hate is expressed by unjustifiable hostility and antagonism towards another, which expresses itself in malicious words and actions whereas the "passive" form of hate is manifested by coldness, by isolation, by exclusion, unconcern for your fellow human being. Joseph's brothers manifested the "active" form of hate by attempting to murder him until Reuben intervened.

The fact that Joseph's brothers sat down to eat while Joseph was pleading with them to free him demonstrates a total lack of pity and no sense of guilt or remorse.

Ironically, the next meal that the brothers will have in Joseph's presence will be with Joseph at the head of the table as prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 43:32-34). Undoubtedly, Joseph's brothers would take the time during the meal to discuss amongst themselves the fate of Joseph.

Evidently, Reuben was not at this meal as indicated in that he was not present when the brothers sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites according to Genesis 37:29-30. It is not stated why Reuben was not at this meal since if he was, Joseph would never have been sold into slavery. He might have

gone back to take care of the flocks since his brothers were so occupied with Joseph.

The statement “they raised their eyes” refers to the fact that Joseph’s brothers looked up from their meal.

The words “looked, behold” signals that what Joseph’s brothers are about to observe, though unknown to them and Joseph, would be of great significance to their family and consequently, of great significance in the history of the nation of Israel and the salvation of the world.

The significance of Joseph being sold into slavery was that it was the first step in fulfilling the prophecy the Lord gave to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-14 that his descendants, the Israelites would be enslaved for four hundred years (round number, actual number 430) in Egypt but would be delivered by God.

At this point in the narrative, Joseph and his brothers were located in Dothan, which was 15 miles north of Shechem and resided close to the main trade route through Palestine, the Via Maris, which cuts across the plain of Jezreel from the Sea of Galilee to pass along the coastal plain to Egypt (Y. Aharoni, *Land of the Bible*, pages 41-49). Therefore, it was a common occurrence for caravans to pass through the area of Dothan since it was close to the main trade route through Palestine to Egypt.

“Ishmaelites” is the proper noun *yishm^e’e’li* (yil!au@m+v+y!) (yish-maw-ay-lee) and they were the descendants of Ishmael and his twelve sons whose father was Abraham and his mother was Hagar (See Genesis 16; 21:9-21; 25:12-18).

Not only was Abraham the father of the nation of Israel that originated with Jacob’s twelve sons but also he was the father of the Arabs through his son Ishmael and his twelve sons (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18). Therefore, Jacob’s sons were related to the Ishmaelites by blood since they both descended from Abraham.

“Gilead” is the proper noun *gil`adh* (du*!+G!) (ghil-adh), which means, “rocky region” and is a mountain region east of the Jordan River 3,000 feet above sea level, extending about 60 miles from near the south end of the Sea of Galilee to the north end of the Dead Sea.

“Gilead” is about 20 miles wide and is bounded on the west by the Jordan River, on the south by the land of Moab, on the north by the Yarmuk River, and on the east by the desert.

If you recall, Jacob fled to Gilead from Laban his father-in-law (Gen 31:21).

The balm of Gilead, an aromatic resin used for medical purposes, was exported to Tyre and elsewhere (Ezek 27:17) and the Ishmaelites who carried Joseph into Egyptian bondage also traded in Gilead balm (Gen 37:25), which appears in Egyptian records as a healing salve (cf. Jer. 8:22; 46:11).

Genesis 37:25 tells us that the Ishmaelites were heading to Egypt and that their camels were carrying “aromatic gum and balm and myrrh.”

“Aromatic gum” is the noun *nekho`th* (tak)n+) (nek-ohth), which refers to a rare spice, believed to be labdanum resin from the *Cistus*.

The *Cistus* according to Encyclopaedia Britannica (1997) was “any of a genus of seventeen species of low to medium sized shrubs in the rock rose family.” This rare spice was used for perfumes, incense and as an expectorant meaning it promoted the secretion of fluid from the respiratory tract.

“Balm” is the proper noun *tsori* (yr!x()) (tsor-ee), which is derived from an unused root *tsarah*, “to crack,” hence, “to leak,” “distillation.”

It is applied to the *opobalsamum*, the balsam distilling from an unknown tree or fruit growing in Gilead of the Transjordan (cf. Ezekiel 27:17). This resin seems to have been widely associated with healing properties and soothed wounds and provided a pleasant aroma to counteract the smell of rotting flesh caused by such wounds.

“Myrrh” is the proper noun *lot* (fO) (lote), which is a perfumed gum produced by the *Cistus incanus* and is called *ladanum* and was used for incense, perfume and as a stimulant and expectorant.

The most common word for “myrrh” is *mor* (rm)) (more), which refers to the gum resin extracted from a number of species and was used as a perfume for embalming.

Nahum Sarna, “Gums and resins played an important role in the economy of Egypt as they

constituted the ingredients of perfumes, cosmetics and medicines, all of which were put to a wide variety of uses in the cult of the gods, in embalming the dead, as sanitizing and deodorizing agents, as insect repellants and above all, for cleansing and conditioning the body in the absence of soap” (Nahum Sarna, JPS Torah Commentary, page 260, The Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 37:26

“Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?’”

Genesis 37:27

“Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers listened to him.”

Now, we see that Judah takes the lead in comes up with an idea. “Judah” (hd*Why+) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “I will praise the Lord” according to Genesis 29:35.

Reuben’s idea of dumping Joseph in the pit (empty cistern) left the problem of Joseph unresolved. The fact that Judah intervenes and actually acknowledges that Joseph is their brother is a sign that like Reuben, Judah had a conscience in that his idea to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites prevented Joseph’s murder.

Judah’s proposal appears cruel on the surface but it appears that he recognized during the meal that Simeon and Levi were determined to treat Joseph harshly so in a desperate attempt to save Joseph’s life he presents this proposal.

Further indicating that Judah, like Reuben was attempting to prevent the murder of Joseph is that later on after Joseph has been sold to the Ishmaelites, Genesis 38:1 records that Judah separated from his brothers when no apparent reason is given, thus implying that Judah did “not” agree with his brothers’ plans to murder Joseph.

Even though Judah’s proposal only substituted one evil for another since like murder, kidnapping was a capital offense (See Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7), his rationale was that Joseph was better off

alive than dead, even if it meant he would spend the rest of his life a slave.

Evidently, while Reuben was away with the flocks, the conversation during the meal returned to murdering Joseph and so Judah intervenes to save Joseph.

By selling Joseph into slavery, Judah reminds his brothers that they would then not be guilty of murder, which indicates that Judah had a conscience before God in that he knew that murder was a capital offense that demanded capital punishment.

The Word of God prohibits murder according to Exodus 20:13 and is one of the sins that God hates according to Proverbs 6:16-19 and according to Genesis 9:6 is to be punished through capital punishment.

Joseph could be killed either by violence or by leaving him in the empty cistern to die of exposure and/or starvation.

Judah’s question, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother?” is design to conceal his true intention to prevent Joseph’s murder by appealing to his brothers’ lust of money.

The phrase “cover up his blood” is a biblical idiom in that since the time of Cain, the blood of a murder victim was said to “cry out” for justice, thus uncovered blood served as a constant reminder of a crime and as an incitement to revenge. Therefore, this phrase reveals Judah’s respect for the laws of God, which prohibit murder.

It appears that both Judah and Reuben feared for their own lives after seeing what Simeon and Levi did to the Shechemites and so they don’t reveal their intentions to save Joseph.

Genesis 37:28, ‘Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they (Joseph’s brothers) pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.’

The “Midianites” (*midhyani*, “strife”) (*yn!y*d+m!*) (mid-yaw-nee) were the descendants of “Midian” the fourth son of Abraham and Keturah according to Genesis 25:1-2 and were a well-known Arabian tribe east of the

Gulf of Aqabah and the Red Sea. They traded in gold and incense according to Isaiah 60:6, Genesis 37:25, 28, and did this from Moab to Sinai and Ephah according to Numbers 22:4, 7, Judges 6-8.

“Keturah” (*goturah*, “incense, perfume”) (כֶּטֻרָה) (ket-oo-raw) became Abraham’s concubine after Sarah’s death (See 1 Chronicles 1:32; Genesis 25:1) and she bore Abraham six sons (Genesis 25:2).

Abraham was the father of one branch of the Arabs by Hagar through Ishmael and his twelve sons as well as the father of another branch of Arabs by Keturah and their six sons (Gen. 17:20; 21:13; 25:12-18).

Keturah’s name, which means, “perfume, fragrance” signifies the trade of her sons.

The names “Ishmaelites” and “Midianites” in Genesis 37:25, 27, 28, 36 and Genesis 39:1 are synonymous terms, which is confirmed by Judges 8:24, which says of the Midianites “they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites.”

Evidently, the descendants of Ishmael and Midian intermarried (See Genesis 25:2, 17-18; 29:9) since both were descended from Abraham, Ishmael’s mother was Hagar and Midian’s was Keturah.

Therefore, the word “they” refers to Joseph’s brothers since the names “Ishmaelites” and “Midianites” are referring to the same group of individuals.

The use of these two terms in Genesis 37 indicates that the term “Ishmaelite” was a generic term or general designation for “nomadic traders” or “desert tribes” whereas “Midianite” indicates a specific ethnic affiliation. Or in other words, the term “Midianites” in Genesis 37 refers to a specific ethnic affiliation among the league of desert tribes or nomadic traders known by the generic use of the term “Ishmaelites.”

The Hebrew text of Genesis 37:28 literally reads, “They dragged and lifted Joseph out from the cistern and they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver and they brought Joseph to Egypt.”

The three-fold repetition of Joseph’s name in the original Hebrew text emphasizes that Joseph being sold into slavery and brought to Egypt was an

extremely important and providential event in the family of Jacob and in the history of the nation of Israel in its infancy.

Joseph’s brothers sold him for “twenty shekels of silver” which was the value of a boy between the ages of five and twenty years of age according to Leviticus 27:5, thus Joseph was sold for this amount.

The average price of a slave of full physical maturity was thirty shekels according to Exodus 21:32, which was the price for which our Lord was betrayed by Judas.

At the time, Joseph’s brothers thought that they had finally rid themselves of Joseph but unwittingly they have contributed to fulfilling Joseph’s dreams and God’s purpose, which was to rule over them as the prime minister of Egypt.

Genesis 37:29-33 presents to us the record of Jacob’s sons deceiving him into believing that Joseph was killed by a wild animal.

Genesis 37:29

“Now Reuben returned to the pit, and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; so he tore his garments.”

Genesis 37:30

“He returned to his brothers and said, ‘The boy is not there; as for me, where am I to go?’”

The fact that Genesis 37:29 records Reuben as “returning” to the pit (the empty cistern) indicates that he was not present when his brothers sold Joseph to the Midianites. A comparison of Genesis 37:29 with 30 reveals that the brothers had left the vicinity of the pit and went about their business.

Reuben knowing they were gone evidently came back secretly, with the intention of freeing Joseph from the pit. However, to his great surprise and dismay, Joseph is gone.

The fact that Reuben’s brothers do “not” respond to his questions as to the whereabouts of Joseph and their lack of surprise that Joseph was not in the pit, and their attempt to murder Joseph not too long ago, would lead Reuben to believe that his brothers had in fact killed Joseph and disposed of the body. There is no indication that Joseph’s brothers informed Reuben that they had sold

Joseph into slavery but rather he believes that Joseph is dead since if his brothers had informed Reuben that they sold Joseph into slavery, he would have pursued the caravan to Egypt in order to buy Joseph back!

Reuben's brothers would "not" want to inform him that they sold Joseph to the Midianites since they knew he would pursue the caravan and buy Joseph back since he previously prevented them from killing Joseph. Therefore, by delivering Joseph they would risk having their conspiracy to kill him exposed, not to mention their actions in selling him into slavery!

Judah would have no desire to tell Reuben of his scheme since he also knew that Reuben would pursue the caravan and buy Joseph back from the Midianites, which would result in exposing his scheme to sell Joseph into slavery, even though the scheme was an attempt to save Joseph from death.

In the ancient world, the tearing of one's garments was a common sign of mourning, grief and dismay (See Leviticus 10:6; 13:45; 21:10). Reuben's emotional reaction not only expressed his dismay at what he thought was the death of Joseph but also that he would be held responsible by Jacob, now Israel, since he was the oldest in the family.

His rhetorical question "as for me where do I go" expresses his anguish over the fact that as the oldest, it would be up to him to convey the bad news to Israel, which he knew would result in his father blaming him and that he has no idea as to what he is going to tell his father as to how Joseph was killed. However, his brothers already have a plan, namely, to tell their father that wild animals had killed Joseph, which would be the alibi that they had originally come up with until Reuben stopped the murder of Joseph from taking place (See Genesis 37:20).

The fact that Reuben is very upset because he thinks Joseph is dead speaks well of him, however his failure to confront his brothers over what he believes is the murder of Joseph reveals a lack of moral courage on his part. More than, likely he lived in fear of Simeon and Levi because he saw what they were capable of when they killed every man in the city of Shechem. In fact, he becomes a

co-conspirator with his brothers in deceiving their father that Joseph was killed by wild animals.

Genesis 37:31-32

"So they took Joseph's tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood; and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, 'We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son's tunic or not.'"

The brothers do "not" overtly tell a lie but they do deceive their father into thinking that Joseph was killed by wild animals. They simply will let their father make the deduction that Joseph is dead by means of the evidence they present to him, which was the long sleeved multicolored coat that he gave Joseph.

There is a subtle irony in the use of the blood of a slaughtered male goat in order to deceive Jacob since Jacob deceived his blind father Isaac with the use of goat skins and Esau's clothing (See Genesis 27:9, 16). Now, he is being deceived by his sons with goat's blood and his son's clothing.

"Varicolored tunic" is composed of the feminine singular form of the noun *kuttoneth* (tr#T)K |) (koot-to-neth), which means, "tunic" and the masculine plural form of the noun *pas* (SP^) (pas), which means, "long tunic with long sleeves."

This tunic extended to the wrists and ankles of a person, which is significant since men in the days of the patriarchs did not work in long sleeves but rather in short sleeves while those in long sleeves were the overseers or employers of those in short sleeves.

This long sleeved coat was more than likely multicolored since the people of the Middle East in the days of the patriarchs were fond of dressing their children in gaudy attire as it still the case today among the Arabs and the country people of the Middle East.

This *k^ethoneth passim*, "long sleeved robe" was a mark of distinction indicating exemption from labor which was the peculiar privilege of a king or a prince. Therefore, Joseph's brothers resented him because this long sleeved robe marked him as exempt from work and expressed Israel's desire that Joseph rule over his brothers.

This long sleeved garment expressed publicly Israel's rejection of Reuben in receiving the birthright as a result of committing adultery and incest with his concubine Bilhah as well as his rejection of Simeon and Levi as well for being the ringleaders in the massacre of Shechem.

The long sleeved multicolored coat would establish for Jacob the identity of its owner. The Hebrew text of Genesis 37:32 clearly indicates that Jacob's sons did "not" personally hand their father Joseph's bloody coat but rather sent messengers to perform this task along with a message to him about the bloodied coat.

"They sent" is the verb *shalach* (jl^v*) (shaw-lakh), which refers to "persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers."

"Brought" is the verb *bo* (aw)B), which is used in the hiphil stem and is semantically connected with the verb *shalach* expressing a single process.

Therefore, since the verb *shalach* refers Jacob's sons sending a messenger to their father, the verb *bo* expresses that this unidentified messenger, probably a servant brought Joseph's bloodied coat to Jacob.

The fact that Jacob's sons do not personally present Joseph's bloodied coat to him but rather send a messenger to do this reveals not only that they sought to avoid any suspicion of involvement in Joseph's demise but also their cowardice and dislike for their father because he favored Joseph over them.

The bluntness of the message sent by Jacob's sons to him "We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son's tunic or not" expresses their resentment towards Jacob for favoring Joseph over them since it does "not" attempt to soften the blow of Joseph's death.

The fact that Jacob's sons do not personally present Joseph's bloodied coat to him but rather send a messenger to do this also indicates that at least some of the brothers like Reuben and Judah felt guilty and did not want to experience the grief of their father.

Notice also, that in the message to their father, Jacob's sons simply state that they "found" Joseph's coat and not "where" they found it.

Genesis 37:33

"Then he examined it and said, 'It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him; Joseph has surely been torn to pieces!'"

Jacob recognizes the coat and then sees that it is stained with blood, which gives him a disturbing mental picture of Joseph actually being torn to pieces by a wild animal. Jacob immediately recognizes the long sleeved multicolored coat that he gave to Joseph but does "not" question his sons more carefully. He jumps to the conclusion that a wild beast had devoured him and did "not" take the time to notice that the coat was "not" torn in pieces but rather simply had blood spattered all over it. Therefore, instead of analyzing and thinking about what he saw and questioning his sons as to "where" they found Joseph's coat, he lets his emotions get the best of him.

Emotion is the responder to what is in the mentality of the soul and cannot think. Therefore, Jacob does not think about the evidence presented to him but instead gets emotional, which blinds him to the fact that since the coat was "not" torn but rather was still intact would indicate that Joseph was "not" torn to pieces by a wild animal since if he was, the coat would have been torn too.

In Genesis 37:34-35, we see Jacob mourning over Joseph since he has been deceived by his sons into thinking that Joseph was killed by a wild animal when in reality his sons sold him into slavery to the Midianites.

Genesis 37:34

"So Jacob tore his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins and mourned for his son many days."

Like Reuben, Jacob tears his clothes to express his extreme grief over the perceived death of Joseph. He also wraps himself in sackcloth, which was a coarse black cloth made of goat's hair as a public demonstration of grief over the death of Joseph.

"Mourned" is the verb *aval* (lb^a*) (aw-val), which refers to outward or public expressions of grief for the death of a loved one including the shedding of tears, wearing sackcloth, sprinkling

with ashes, lying on the ground and shaving of the head or beard.

These actions were considered appropriate signifying anguish in the ancient world in the days of the patriarchs. Mourning for the dead began immediately at death, went on as the body was carried to the tomb, was observed at the tomb and lasted at least seven days after the burial.

Jacob's grief is compounded in that there is no body to bury and therefore, no closure. Jacob is said to have mourned Joseph for "many days," which expresses the intensity of his grief.

Genesis 37:35

"Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, 'Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.' So his father wept for him."

Jacob is inconsolable more than likely out of guilt for sending Joseph alone on such a dangerous mission in the first place. Just a few short years before, Jacob's favorite wife Rachel died giving birth to their second child Benjamin and now he had lost their firstborn, Joseph.

Like God, Jacob had big plans for Joseph since he had intended to give the birthright to Joseph, which was in agreement with God's will according to 1 Chronicles 5:1-2.

Jacob's statement "Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son" expresses his determination to grieve publicly for Joseph until the day he died.

The term "sons" does "not" refer to the sons Jacob fathered, which would include Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun but rather it refers to his grandsons.

The term "sons" is the noun *ben* (/B@) (bane), which does "not" always refer to a boy that a man fathers himself but rather it can also refer to a grandson as well.

The context will determine, whether a son or a grandson is in view. In our particular context, the term *ben* refers to Jacob's grandsons. If you recall, when Joseph's brothers sold him to the Midianites they were located in Dothan, which was

approximately 15 miles north of Shechem.

According to Genesis 37:14, Jacob was located in Hebron when he sent Joseph to check on the safety of his sons who were in Shechem. As we noted Sunday in Genesis 37:32, Joseph's brothers did "not" personally delivered Joseph's bloody coat to their father in Hebron but rather sent the coat via a messenger.

This is clearly indicated since in Genesis 37:32, the phrase "they sent" is the verb *shalach* (jl^v*) (shaw-lakh), which refers to "persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers." So therefore, Simeon, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun did "not" comfort their father when he examined Joseph's bloodied coat and determined that Joseph had been torn to pieces by a wild animal.

Genesis 46:8-26 lists the grandchildren of Jacob and many of these children are the ones who comforted Jacob when he received the bloodied coat from his sons.

The noun *bath* (tB^), "daughters" refers to all the females in Jacob's household, which would include his only daughter Dinah, his daughters-in-law as well as granddaughters. The term *bath* can be used to describe a "granddaughter" or a "daughter-in-law" and not just a "daughter."

"Sheol" is the noun *sh'ol* (lw)av+) (sheh-ole), which in the New Testament is called "Hades" and refers to one of four compartments called in Scripture "Paradise," which prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ contained the departed souls of believers.

A comparison of Scripture with Scripture reveals that "Sheol/Hades" contains four compartments: (1) Paradise: the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to heaven after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:10). (2) Torments: the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from all dispensations (Lk. 16:19-31) who will be transferred to the Great White Throne Judgment that concludes human history and from there will be cast in the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). (3) Tartarus: the abode of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who had sex with woman in order to

corrupt the human race and prevent the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 4; Jude 6). (4) The Abyss: the place of imprisonment for the demons who violated certain rules for angelic creation and will be released during the Tribulation (Lk. 8:30-31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 20:1-3).

Prior to the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints when they died did not go to the third heaven but rather to Paradise. These Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ascended with Jesus Christ into heaven as part of our Lord's triumphal procession as victor in the angelic conflict and were part of the booty from our Lord's victory that was accomplished through His death and resurrection (See Ephesians 4:8). Therefore, "Sheol" is the place that the souls of Old Testament believers like Jacob departed to at physical death.

In Genesis 37:36, we will see that the Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to a man named Potiphar who was Pharaoh's officer.

Genesis 37:36

"Meanwhile, the Midianites sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard."

The "Midianites" (*midhyani*, "strife") (yn!y*d+m!) (mid-yaw-nee) were the descendants of "Midian" the fourth son of Abraham and Keturah according to Genesis 25:1-2 and were a well-known Arabian tribe east of the Gulf of Aqabah and the Red Sea.

The names "Ishmaelites" and "Midianites" in Genesis 37:25, 27, 28, 36 and Genesis 39:1 are synonymous terms, which is confirmed by Judges 8:24, which says of the Midianites "they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites."

The use of these two terms in Genesis 37 indicates that the term "Ishmaelite" was as a generic term or general designation for "nomadic traders" or "desert tribes" whereas "Midianite" indicates a specific ethnic affiliation. Or in other words, the term "Midianites" in Genesis 37 refers to a specific ethnic affiliation among the league of desert tribes or nomadic traders known by the generic use of the term "Ishmaelites."

"Egypt" is the proper noun *mitsrayim* (<y!r^x+m!) (mits-ra-yim), which means, "double straits."

Genesis 10:6 records that "Mizraim" was the second son of Ham and was the ancestor of the ancient Egyptians as indicated in that his name was the customary name for Egypt in the Bible. Also, further confirming this interpretation is that Egypt is also called "the land of Ham" in Psalm 104:23, suggesting that Ham accompanied his son Mizraim in the original settlement of the Nile Valley (see Psalm 78:51).

Genesis 10:13-14 records the genealogy of the sons of "Mizraim" better known as Egypt.

Genesis 10:13, 14

"Mizraim (miz'ra-im-"double straits") became the father of Ludim (lu'dim-"to the firebrands: travailings") and Anamim (an'a-mim-"affliction of the waters") and Lehabim (le-ha'bim-"flames") and Naphtuhim (naf'tu-him-"openings")."

"and Pathrusim (path-ru-sim-"a morsel moistening") and Casluhim (kas'lu-him-"forgiven ones") (from which came the Philistines ["immigrants"]) and Caphtorim (kaf-tor-im-"knob or bud")."

Ancient Egypt was divided into three geographical sections: (1) Upper Egypt in the south (2) Middle Egypt in the center (3) Lower Egypt or Delta in the north. Most scholars divide into two sections: (1) Upper (2) Lower.

Upper Egypt is very narrow and surrounded by mountains, which rarely take the form of peaks and the northern coast of Egypt is low and barren, and without good harbors.

The political history of Egypt traditionally begins with Menes, the Upper ruler who conquered Lower Egypt according to Egyptian tradition. The history of dynastic Egypt can be divided into the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (2100-1800 B.C.) and the New Kingdom (1550-1069 B.C.). The pyramids were built during the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom coincides with the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

and Joseph whereas the birth of Moses and Exodus of Israel took place during the New Kingdom.

Eugene H. Merrill provides us an insightful comment regarding the time that Joseph lived in Egypt in relation to the Pharaohs of Egypt, he writes the following: “Joseph was born in 1916 B.C., entered Egypt in 1899 B.C., rose to power in 1886, and died in 1806 at the age of 110. His whole lifespan was contemporaneous with the magnificent Dynasty 12 of Middle Kingdom Egypt, a dynasty which commenced in 1991 and ended in 1786 B.C. Though the chronology of this period is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, the *Cambridge Ancient History* dates used here cannot be far off. By this system of reckoning Joseph was sold into Egypt in the closing years of the reign of Ammenemes II (1929-1895). His was a peaceful reign characterized by an improved agricultural and economic life and by the fostering of close relationships with western Asia. Joseph would have been welcomed on the basis of his ethnic background. His imprisonment would have occurred under Sesostris II (1897-1878), approximately a decade after his arrival in Egypt (1889). It was Sesostris II whose dreams Joseph interpreted and whom he served as prime minister. It is significant that Sesostris II was in power at the time the nomarch of Beni Hasan welcomed the Semitic chieftain Abisha to his city, an event celebrated in the famous murals of Beni Hasan. Sesostris also imported and employed great numbers of Asiatic slaves and mercenaries, a policy, which shows anything but an anti-Semitic bias. Most striking of all perhaps were the massive land-reclamation and flood-control projects undertaken under the administration of this enlightened monarch. A principal feature of these was a canal dug to connect the Fayyum basin with the Nile, a canal whose ruins to this very day bear the name Bahr Yusef, “the River of Joseph.” Can it be that this name survives as a testimony to the contribution of Joseph to the public works projects of Sesostris II?” (Kingdom of Priests, pages 49-50, Baker Book House).

“Potiphar” is the proper noun *potiphar* (rO^yf!w)O (po-tee-far), which is the shortened form of the Egyptian name *Potiphara*, which means, “he whom Ra (the sun-god) has given.”

The occupation of “Potiphar” is identified as “Pharaoh’s officer, the captain of the bodyguard.”

“Pharaoh” is the proper noun *par`oh* (hu)r+P^ (Hebrew: par-o) (English: phay-row), which means, “great house” and was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. The term was originally used to describe the palace of the king but around 1500 B.C. this term was applied to the Egyptian kings and meant something like “his honor, his majesty.”

“Officer” is the noun *saris* (syr!s*) (saw-reece), which refers to either court officials or to literal eunuchs and is regarded as a loanword from Akkadian referring to a high-ranking court official, which in early biblical literature appears to be the meaning. However, in later times, the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians adopted the practice of castrating those who served in the royal palace and the harems. Consequently, the term came to mean “eunuch” meaning a castrated male, thus one who is sexually impotent. Kings did not wish to risk a son of a servant being an heir to the throne. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, yet he had a wife, thus clearly indicating that he was not castrated and therefore, not a eunuch. Therefore, the expression “Pharaoh’s officer” (*s^eris par`oh*)” refers to the fact that Potiphar was a “high ranking official” under Pharaoh of Egypt.

The expression “the captain of the bodyguard” defines Potiphar’s role as a high ranking official under Pharaoh of Egypt.

“Bodyguard” is the noun *tabbach* (jB*f^ (tab-bawkh), which means, “butcher,” or “cook” and is derived from the verb *tavach* (jB^f*) (taw-vakh), which means, “to slaughter.”

Basically, the connotation of the verbal root is to deliberately “butcher” or “slaughter” an animal for food. However, this concept is also used metaphorically to indicate the killing of human beings.

When *tabbach* appears in the plural as it does in Genesis 37:36, it means, “bodyguards” or “executioners.”

The word appears 32 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and appears twice in 1 Samuel 9:23f with the meaning “cook” and 30 times and always in the plural with the meaning “bodyguards” (cf.

Genesis 39:1; 2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 39:9ff). This latter meaning is unique to the Hebrew Old Testament.

The history of this term tells us that the bodyguards had as one of their responsibilities the slaughtering and preparing of animals for food (Compare Genesis 40:2) and these men functioned also as executioners. Therefore, the expression “the captain of the bodyguard” reveals that Potiphar was the leader of not only the royal bodyguards offering protection to Pharaoh and his family but also they were the royal executioners for Pharaoh who executed capital sentences order by Pharaoh.

Therefore, we can see that through the providence of God Joseph was taken to the capital city of Egypt, which during the 12th Dynasty was Memphis and sold to a high ranking official in Pharaoh’s cabinet, namely, Potiphar. The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

Therefore, the fact that Joseph ended up in Egypt with Potiphar did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob’s family and to bring glory to Him. God has figured into the divine decree so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself not only the resentment of Joseph’s brothers towards him but also their selling him into slavery and Joseph ending upon in Egypt.

God rendered certain to take place that Joseph would end up in Egypt and be sold to Pharaoh’s officer, and captain of the bodyguard, Potiphar and it was thus a part of God’s plan. The fact that Joseph would end up in Egypt, was part of God’s plan for Jacob’s family from eternity past. The fact that Joseph ended up with Potiphar, a high ranking official in Pharaoh’s government in Egypt was part of God’s chosen and adopted plan for not only Joseph but his entire family.

The fact that Joseph ended up in Egypt was part of God’s eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory. The fact that Joseph ended up in Egypt was known by God in

eternity past before anything was created and was sovereignly determined by God to take place at the time these events did. It was God’s eternal and immutable will that Joseph would be purchased as a slave by Potiphar and end up in Egypt and God decreed that this would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire. The Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

Typology of Genesis 37

It is fascinating and instructive to note that Joseph is a type of Christ. Many of the events that took place in Joseph’s life that we studied in Genesis 37 “typify” or “foreshadow” or “parallel” the events that took place in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

“Typology” is from the Greek word for form or pattern, which is *tupos* (τυπος) and in biblical times denoted both the original model or prototype and the copy that resulted.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between two historical entities.

An example of a type is found in Romans 5.

Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

The Lord Jesus Christ employed typology in His teaching about Himself. For example, in John 6, the Lord compared His humanity to the manna that was given to Israel, which typified His human nature that would provide for spiritual nourishment.

A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we will see in this evening’s study that the historical personage of Joseph “parallels” the historical personage of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Also, many of the historical events in the life of Joseph that are

recorded in Genesis 37 “parallel” many of the historical events in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The fact that the events in the life of Joseph that are recorded in Genesis 37 typified the many of the events in the life of Christ and that Joseph himself is a type of Christ does “not” mean that Joseph is equal to the Lord but rather that Joseph and the events in his life foreshadow the Lord and the events in His life.

No other character in the Bible foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ more than Joseph. In Joseph we see the Lord Jesus as the Preserver, Provider and Savior. Of the seven great figures in the book of Genesis whose biographies we have studied, Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Joseph’s story is the longest.

Genesis 37:2, “These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father.”

Genesis 37:2 records Joseph as a shepherd feeding his father’s flocks, which typifies or foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd who fed His heavenly Father’s flock.

John 10:11, “I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.”

Genesis 37:3, “Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic.”

Genesis 37:3 records that Joseph was loved by his father Israel, which typifies God the Father’s love for His Son Jesus Christ.

Matthew 3:17, “and behold, a voice out of the heavens said, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased.’”

Matthew 17:5, “While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, ‘This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!’”

Genesis 37:4, 5

“His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms.”

“Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more.”

Genesis 37:4 and 5 records that Joseph was rejected and hated by his brothers, which foreshadows our Lord’s Jewish brethren rejecting and hating him.

John 1:11, “He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.”

John 15:23-25

“He who hates Me hates My Father also.”

“If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.”

“But they have done this to fulfill the word that is written in their Law, ‘THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.’”

Genesis 37:6-10

“He said to them, ‘Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.’”

“Then his brothers said to him, ‘Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?’ So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.”

“Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, ‘Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.’”

“He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?’”

The two prophetic dreams that Joseph received from God, which predicted his preeminence over his brothers typifies or parallels the Lord Jesus Christ's preeminence over every creature and all of creation.

Colossians 1:18, "He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything."

The fact that Joseph's brothers disbelieved his words typifies or parallels our Lord's Jewish brethren rejecting His words.

John 6:63, 64

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life."

"But there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him."

The fact that Joseph's brothers rejected this prophecy that he would reign and rule over them also foreshadows our Lord's Jewish brethren rejecting Him as the King of Israel.

John 19:14, 15

"Now it was the day of preparation for the Passover; it was about the sixth hour. And he (Pilate) said to the Jews, 'Behold, your King!'"

"So they cried out, 'Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him!' Pilate said to them, 'Shall I crucify your King?' The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Caesar.'"

Genesis 37:11, "His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

That Joseph's brothers were jealous of him foreshadows the leaders of the Jews envy and jealousy of our Lord.

Matthew 27:17-18, "So when the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that because of envy they had handed Him over."

That Joseph's father dwelled upon the two prophetic dreams that Joseph revealed to him typifies or parallels our Lord's mother Mary dwelling upon the things our Lord said to her that He must be about His Father's business when they found Him at twelve years of age in the Temple.

Luke 2:51, "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart."

Genesis 37:12, 13

"Then his brothers went to pasture their father's flock in Shechem."

"Israel said to Joseph, 'Are not your brothers pasturing the flock in Shechem? Come, and I will send you to them.' And he said to him, 'I will go.'"

Joseph's obedience to his father to find his brothers typifies the Lord Jesus Christ obedience to His heavenly Father's will to seek and save sinners.

Hebrews 10:7, "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"

Luke 22:42, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."

John 4:34, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."

Genesis 37:14, "Then he said to him, 'Go now and see about the welfare of your brothers and the welfare of the flock, and bring word back to me.' So he sent him from the valley of Hebron, and he came to Shechem."

The fact that Joseph was sent by his father Israel to his brothers also typifies God the Father sending His Son Jesus Christ into the world.

1 John 4:9, 10

"By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him."

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Genesis 37:15-17

"A man found him, and behold, he was wandering in the field; and the man asked him, 'What are you looking for?'"

"He said, 'I am looking for my brothers; please tell me where they are pasturing the flock.'"

"Then the man said, 'They have moved from here; for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' So Joseph went after his brothers and found them at Dothan.'"

The fact that Joseph was found by an unidentified man wandering in the field foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who had no place to lay His head.

Genesis 37:10,, "And Jesus said to him, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'"

That Joseph was seeking out his brothers also foreshadows the Lord Jesus Christ who would come to seek and to save lost sinners among His Jewish brethren.

Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Genesis 37:18-20

"When they saw him from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death."

"They said to one another, 'Here comes this dreamer!'"

"Now then, come and let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits; and we will say, 'A wild beast devoured him.' Then let us see what will become of his dreams!"

The fact that Joseph's brothers conspired to kill him typified our Lord's Jewish brethren conspiring to kill Him.

John 11:47-53

"Therefore the chief priests and the Pharisees convened a council, and were saying, 'What

are we doing? For this man is performing many signs.'"

"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

"But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, 'You know nothing at all, nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation not perish.'"

"Now he did not say this on his own initiative, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that He might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad."

"So from that day on they planned together to kill Him."

Genesis 37:21-24

"But Reuben heard this and rescued him out of their hands and said, 'Let us not take his life.'"

"Reuben further said to them, 'Shed no blood. Throw him into this pit that is in the wilderness, but do not lay hands on him' -- that he might rescue him out of their hands, to restore him to his father."

"So it came about, when Joseph reached his brothers that they stripped Joseph of his tunic, the varicolored tunic that was on him; and they took him and threw him into the pit. Now the pit was empty, without any water in it."

When Joseph's brothers stripped off his multicolored long-sleeved tunic or coat little did they know that this action foreshadowed the Romans stripping off our Lord's garments in order to scourge Him and when they crucified Him.

Matthew 27:27-28, "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole Roman cohort around Him. They stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him."

John 19:23, "Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His outer garments and

made four parts, a part to every soldier and also the tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece.”

When Joseph’s brothers cast him into the pit, this foreshadowed our Lord’s death.

Matthew 12:40, “for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Genesis 37:25, “Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt.”

The fact that Joseph’s brothers sat down after throwing him into the pit typifies the Romans soldiers sitting down to watch our Lord after crucifying Him.

Matthew 27:33-36, “And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means Place of a Skull, they gave Him wine to drink mixed with gall; and after tasting it, He was unwilling to drink. And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. And sitting down, they began to keep watch over Him there.”

Genesis 37:26-28

“Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?’”

“Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers listened to him.”

‘Then some Midianite traders passed by, so they (Joseph’s brothers) pulled him up and lifted Joseph out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. Thus they brought Joseph into Egypt.”

The fact that Joseph was sold to the Midianites/Ishmaelites at the price of a slave for twenty shekels of silvers foreshadows Judas

betraying Jesus for thirty shekels of silver, which was the price of a slave.

“Twenty shekels of silver” was the value of a boy between the ages of five and twenty years of age according to Leviticus 27:5 whereas the average price of a slave of full physical maturity was thirty shekels according to Exodus 21:32, which was the price for which our Lord was betrayed by Judas.

Matthew 26:14-15, “Then one of the twelve, named Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me to betray Him to you?’ And they weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him.”

When Joseph’s brothers pulled him out of the pit, this typified our Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection.

Psalms 16:10, “For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; Nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay.”

That Joseph was brought to Egypt foreshadows our Lord brought to Egypt by Joseph.

Matthew 2:13-15

“Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.’”

“So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.”

“He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.’”

Genesis 38

Genesis 38 is divided into two segments: (1) Genesis 38:1-11 records that Judah marries the daughter of a prominent Canaanite named Shua who bears him three sons, Er, Onan and Shelah. (2) Genesis 38:12-30 records that Judah unknowingly has sex with his daughter-in-law Tamar, who bears him twins, Perez and Zerah.

Genesis 38:1-11 can also be divided into two sections: (1) Genesis 38:1-5 records Judah marries the daughter of the Canaanite Shua and fathers three sons. (2) Genesis 38:6-11 records the arranged marriages of Judah's three sons to Tamar.

Judah's marriage to a Canaanite woman disregards the divine curse upon the Canaanites that is recorded in the prophecy of Noah that appears in Genesis 9:24-27.

Genesis 9:25, "So he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.'"

The fact that the patriarchs were prohibited from marrying Canaanites is indicated in that Abraham prohibited Eliezer his servant from getting Isaac his son a Canaanite woman (Genesis 24:3) and Isaac issued the same prohibition to Jacob (See Genesis 28:1). In fact, Esau's Hittite wives who were also Canaanites brought grief to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah because their godless lifestyle was repulsive to his parents who possessed a covenant relationship with the Lord (See Genesis 26:35).

Now, we must remember that this curse upon Canaan was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it such as Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite. As we will note, like Rahab, Tamar, a Canaanite woman embraces the faith of Judah, her father-in-law.

Keil and Delitzsch commenting on Genesis 38, write, "The following sketch from the life of Judah is intended to point out the origin of the three leading families of the future princely tribe in Israel, and at the same time to show in what danger the sons of Jacob would have been of forgetting the sacred vocation of their race, through marriages with Canaanitish women, and of perishing in the sin of Canaan, if the mercy of God had not interposed, and by leading Joseph into Egypt prepared the way for the removal of the whole house of Jacob into that land, and thus protected the family, just as it was expanding into a nation, from the corrupting influence of the manners and customs of Canaan. This being the intention of the narrative, it is no episode or interpolation, but an integral part of the early

history of Israel, which is woven here into the history of Jacob, because the events occurred subsequently to the sale of Joseph." (Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament: New Updated Edition, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1996 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.)

When approaching the study of Genesis 38, we must understand that this chapter is a "parenthesis" providing the account of events that took place over a number of years. Therefore, Genesis 39:1 is a continuation of Genesis 37.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on the fact that Genesis 38 is a parenthesis, writes, "The scene abruptly interrupts the main narrative that traces the sale of Joseph into Egypt (cf. 37:36 with 39:1). However, in the concentric pattern that unifies Book 10, this scene traces Jacob's blessing on Judah as ruler over his brothers. In fact, Judah's prominence in Genesis 37:26-27 foreshadowed his rise to prominence in this scene" (Genesis, A Commentary, page 506).

Indicating that Genesis 38 is a parenthesis is the repetition that appears when comparing Genesis 37:36 with Genesis 39:1, where both passages record that Joseph was sold to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard.

The events recorded in Genesis 38 are a reminder that the tenth book contained in Genesis 37:2-50:26 is "not" the story of Joseph but rather the story of the character transformation of Jacob's sons under the providential care and protection of God. Genesis 37:2-50:26 contains the account of God providentially working in the life of Jacob and of his sons through the instrumentality of Joseph. Joseph is certainly the central figure in these chapters, but he is not the only figure since God is forming a nation out of all the sons of Jacob and not just Joseph. In fact, Judah was chosen to carry on the line of Christ while Joseph inherited the birthright in the family.

Gordon J. Wenham provides an insightful comment when approaching Genesis 38, he writes, "The relationship of this episode to the theme of Genesis must be explored. Again on first sight, this chapter apparently has nothing to do with the promises to Abraham of land, nationhood and blessing to the nations. But the central problem of

chapter 38 is childlessness. Onan dies because he refuses to procreate. He did not want to produce children for his brother, and by implication for his father and grandfather. In other words, by his action Onan demonstrates his disregard for the patriarchal promises. On the other hand, Tamar, a Canaanite girl, is most anxious to have children. Despite the deaths of her first two husbands, she is anxious to marry Shelah. And when she is thwarted by her father-in-law, she manages to find a way of having children through him. Such determination to propagate descendants of Abraham, especially by a Canaanite woman, is remarkable, and so despite her foreign background and irregular behavior, Tamar emerges as the heroine of this story. She is like Melchizedek (chapter 14) and Abimelech (chapter 26), one of those foreigners who see God's hand at work in Abraham and his descendants and therefore, align themselves with Israel. In the likes of Tamar the promise that 'all the families of the earth will find blessing in you' starts to be fulfilled. She is the forerunner of Ruth who said, 'Your people shall be my people and your God my God' (Ruth 1:16), as well as being ancestor of Ruth's husband Boaz. (Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2, 16-50, Nelson Reference and Electronic, page 365).

A span of over twenty two years expires between the sale of Joseph and the settlement of Jacob's family in Egypt, which is indicated in that Joseph is seventeen when he enters Egypt (See Genesis 37:2) and thirteen years later he becomes prime minister of Egypt with seven years of prosperity (41:46-47).

Furthermore, after the famine becomes severe, Judah again encounters Joseph (42:1-7) and after two years of famine the entire family arrives in Egypt (45:6). Judah's story begins at the time he sells Joseph in to Egypt, which was to prevent the murder of Joseph by his other brothers and in particular Simeon and Levi who murdered all the men of the city of Shechem (See Genesis 34).

Genesis 38:1 records Judah leaving his brothers in Dothan and heading back home to Hebron to see his father Jacob but instead turns aside and comes into contact with a man named Hirah who lived in the city of Adullam.

Genesis 38:1

“And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah.”

In Genesis 38:1, the phrase “and it came about at that time” chronologically connects the sale of Joseph to Judah's intermarriage with the Canaanites.

The fact that Judah proposes to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites rather than killing him along with the phrase “Judah departed from his brothers” is a clear indication that Judah did “not” agree with his brother's desire to kill Joseph and so he separates from them.

If you recall, Reuben intervened and prevented his brothers from killing Joseph and proposed as an alternative to killing him with their bare hands to throw him into an empty cistern and letting him die of natural causes. This alternative was proposed by Reuben with the intention of saving Joseph when his brothers were not around.

After this Reuben left his brothers while they ate a meal and during the meal the talk was certainly revolving around Joseph and the idea of killing him. Genesis 37:25-28 records Judah proposing to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites in order to prevent the murder of Joseph by his brothers.

Judah, like Reuben, disguised his desire to prevent the murder of Joseph because he feared for his own life since Simeon and Levi had recently killed all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah. Even though selling Joseph into slavery was evil, Judah felt that Joseph was better off alive as a slave than being dead.

Genesis 37:25-27

“Then they sat down to eat a meal. And as they raised their eyes and looked, behold, a caravan of Ishmaelites was coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing aromatic gum and balm and myrrh, on their way to bring them down to Egypt.”

“Judah said to his brothers, ‘What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?’”

“Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh. And his brothers listened to him.”

Judah’s proposed sale of Joseph into slavery was designed to prevent his murder and this is implied in his statement in Genesis 37:26, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother and cover up his blood?”

The phrase “cover up his blood” is a biblical idiom in that since the time of Cain, the blood of a murder victim was said to “cry out” for justice, thus uncovered blood served as a constant reminder of a crime and as an incitement to revenge. Therefore, this phrase reveals Judah’s acknowledgement and respect for the laws of God, which prohibit murder.

In Genesis 37:26, Judah’s question, “What profit is it for us to kill our brother?” is design to conceal his true intention to prevent Joseph’s murder by appealing to his brothers’ love of money.

Also, Judah’s statement in Genesis 37:27, “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh” reveals that he has a conscience in that he acknowledges and reminds his brothers that Joseph is their brother.

Judah departs from his brothers and then turned aside to a man whose name was Hirah, who was an Adullamite.

“Departed” is the verb *yaradh* (dr^y*) (yaw-rad), which refers to a geographical descent from a higher elevation to a lower elevation.

Judah and his brothers were residing in Dothan at this time and not with their father who according to Genesis 37:14 was residing in Hebron. Most nearly all commentators contend that Judah and his brothers went back to Hebron and comforted their father and use Genesis 37:35 to support their contention.

Genesis 37:35, “Then all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. And he said, ‘Surely I will go down to Sheol in mourning for my son.’ So his father wept for him.”

However, the term “sons” is the noun *ben* (/B@) (bane) does “not” always refer to a boy that a man fathers himself but rather it can also refer to a grandson as well.

The context will determine, whether a son or a grandson is in view. In our particular context, the term *ben* in Genesis 37:35 refers to Jacob’s grandsons.

As we noted earlier, when Joseph’s brothers sold him to the Midianites they were located in Dothan, which was approximately 15 miles north of Shechem. According to Genesis 37:14, Jacob was located in Hebron when he sent Joseph to check on the safety of his sons who Jacob thought were in Shechem.

As we noted Sunday in Genesis 37:32, Joseph’s brothers did “not” personally deliver Joseph’s bloody coat to their father in Hebron but rather sent the coat via a messenger.

Genesis 37:31-32, “So they took Joseph’s tunic, and slaughtered a male goat and dipped the tunic in the blood; and they sent the varicolored tunic and brought it to their father and said, ‘We found this; please examine it to see whether it is your son’s tunic or not.’”

The fact that Joseph’s brothers sent messengers with Joseph’s coat rather than delivering it themselves is clearly indicated by the verb *shalach* (jl^v*) (shaw-lakh), “they sent,” which refers to “persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers.”

Therefore, in Genesis 37:35, the term “sons” refers to Jacob’s grandsons and his youngest son Benjamin and does “not” refer to the sons Jacob fathered himself with his four wives since they were in Dothan avoiding their father.

So Benjamin was Jacob’s only son that comforted him since he was too young to be out in the fields with his other brothers. Genesis 46:8-26 lists the grandchildren of Jacob and many of these children comforted Jacob when he received the bloodied coat from his sons.

Therefore, Judah “descended” from Dothan to Adullam, which was in the foothills 16 miles southwest of Jerusalem and north of Hebron. Dothan is approximately fifteen miles north of

Shechem and is located on a hill surrounded by a flat, fertile valley and is known for its rich pastureland and Shechem is approximately 1,880 feet above sea level.

In Genesis 38:1, the verb *yaradh* refers to Judah's descent from Dothan, which is 1,880 feet above sea level to Adullam, which is in the foothills about 16 miles southwest of Jerusalem. Not only does the verb *yaradh* refer to Judah's descent in a geographical sense but it also refers to his "spiritual" descent in the sense that he intermarries with the Canaanites, which was in disobedience to God. Therefore, the use of the verb *yaradh* by the Holy Spirit is a double entendre symbolizing Judah's spiritual descent from God through his intermarriage with the Canaanites.

"Visited" is the verb *natah* (hf*n*) (naw-taw), which means, "to turn aside," referring to an alteration in a present course of action.

Therefore, the verb *natah* indicates that Judah was not initially headed towards Adullam but that he was on a journey and came to Hirah's house and decided to turn aside from his present course. It appears that Judah was heading back to Hebron to see his father since Adullam was on the way to Hebron!

The phrase "a certain Adullamite" is composed of the preposition *`adh* (du^), "coming in contact with" followed by the masculine singular noun *`ish* (vya!) (eesh), "man" and then the proper noun *`adhullami* (ym!L*d | u&) (ad-ool-law-mee), "Adullamite."

The preposition *`adh* is used with the verbs *yaradh*, "to descend" and *natah*, "to turn aside" and in context indicates "coming into contact with" a person.

The term "Adullamite" is the proper noun *`adhullami* (ym!L*d | u&) (ad-ool-law-mee), which refers to a citizen of the city of Adullam, which was approximately 3 miles southwest of Bethlehem and 8 miles northwest of Hebron and was a royal Canaanite city at the time of Joshua (See Joshua 12:15) and may have already been so at the time of Judah.

"Hirah" is the proper noun *chirah* (hr*yj!) (khee-raw), which means, "nobility" and according to

Genesis 38:12 and 20, "Hirah" was a friend of Judah. Therefore, the original Hebrew text of Genesis 38:1 says that Judah descended from his brothers' location and then turned aside coming in contact with an Adullamite man, and his name was Hirah. It appears that Judah was already friendly with Hirah and was familiar with the city of Adullam. So instead of returning to Hebron to see his father he visits an old friend who was a Canaanite.

Undoubtedly, Judah did not want to face his father who was overcome with grief because he felt guilty since he proposed the sale of Joseph to the Midianites and he was a co-conspirator with his brothers in deceiving their father into thinking that Joseph was killed by a wild animal.

In Genesis 38:2-5, we will Judah marrying a Canaanite woman who bears him three sons named Er, Onan and Shelah.

Genesis 38:1

"And it came about at that time, that Judah departed from his brothers and visited a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah."

Genesis 38:2

"Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her and went in to her."

"Judah" (hd*Why+) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, "I will praise the Lord" according to Genesis 29:35 and the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature descended from him.

Hebrews 7:14, "For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah."

"Saw" is the verb *ra'ah* (ha*r*) (raw-aw), which refers to Judah's physical attraction to this unidentified Canaanite woman whose father was named Shua.

"Took" is the verb *laqach* (jq^!*) (law-kakh), which refers to marriage and the phrase "went in" is the verb *bo* (aw)B), which refers to consummating the marriage through sexual intercourse.

Usually in Scripture when the verb *laqach* is used in the context of marriage, it does not appear with

ra'ah, "to see" (See Genesis 24:4, 67; 25:1, 20; 26:34). The fact that the verb *ra'ah* is employed in this passage emphasizes that Judah married this unidentified Canaanite woman based upon his physical attraction to her or sexual lust for her rather than based upon her godly character.

Together, these verbs *ra'ah*, "saw" *laqach*, "took" and *bo*, "went in" imply that Judah married this unidentified Canaanite woman based upon sexual lust for her physical body. These verbs *ra'ah*, "saw" *laqach*, "took" and *bo*, "went in" emphasize that like his father Jacob who chose to marry Rachel based upon her physical beauty rather than her character, so Judah marries this unidentified Canaanite woman based upon his physical attraction to her or sexual lust rather than her spiritual or godly character.

The Word of God reveals that like his father Jacob who chose Rachel based solely upon looks and did not take into consideration her character as Abraham's servant Eliezer did when selecting Rebekah for Isaac so Judah chose this unidentified Canaanite woman based upon sexual lust.

Proverbs 12:4, "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones."

Proverbs 31:10, "A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies."

Judah's Canaanite wife is identified as being the daughter of a Canaanite man named "Shua," which is the proper noun *shua`* (u^Wv) (shoo-ah), which means, "wealth."

1 Chronicles 2:3 identifies the name of Judah's Canaanite wife as being "Bathshua," which is the proper noun *bath-shua* (u^Wv-tB!) (bath-shoo-ah), which means, "daughter of wealth."

Her name is mentioned in 1 Chronicles 2:3 for historical purposes whereas her name is omitted in Genesis 38:2 to indicate God's disapproval of Judah's marriage to this Canaanite woman.

The name of Judah's Canaanite wife is omitted indicating that she was an unbeliever and God prohibits believers like Judah from marrying an unbeliever like this Canaanite woman who are children of the devil.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15, "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?"

Also, the name of Judah's Canaanite wife is omitted because God prohibited Jacob's sons from intermarrying with the Canaanites (See Genesis 9:24-27; 24:3; 26:34-35; 28:1).

Genesis 9:25, "So he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brothers.'"

Furthermore, the name of Judah's Canaanite wife is omitted because God totally disapproved of her godless character, which is manifested in that all three of the sons that she bore Judah were rejected by God from carrying on Judah's patriarchal line. In fact, two of the three boys that this woman bore to Judah were notoriously wicked in the eyes of God and were killed by God!

By marrying an unbeliever, Judah is solving his problem of being unmarried by going to the cosmic system of Satan, the devil's world and is therefore operating in unbelief since he is not trusting God to provide a wife for him.

Psalms 27:14, "Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD."

Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God."

Genesis 38:3

"So she conceived and bore a son and he named him Er."

A comparison of the verbs in Genesis 38:2 with 38:3 indicates that Judah and this Canaanite woman named Bath-shua only related to each other sexually and in no other way since the text does not say anything about their relationship.

Judah's relationship to this Canaanite woman is described in Genesis 38:2 with the verbs, he saw her, he marries her, he has sexual intercourse with her whereas the relationship of Judah's wife to

him is described in Genesis 38:3 with the verbs, she conceives, bears a son and names the child.

The name of Judah's first son is "Er" (ru@) (ayr), which means, "one who watches."

Genesis 38:4

"Then she conceived again and bore a son and named him Onan."

The name of Judah's second son is "Onan" (/n*w)a) (o-nawn), which means, "vigorous."

Genesis 38:5

"She bore still another son and named him Shelah; and it was at Chezib that she bore him."

The name of Judah's third son is "Shelah" (hl*v@) (shay-law), which may mean, "drawn out (of the womb)."

The birthplace of Shelah is identified as being at "Chezib" (byw!K+) (kez-eeb), which means, "false" and was located southwest of Adullam.

The birthplace of Judah's first two sons are not given, however the birthplace of his third son Shelah "is mentioned for the definite information of the descendants of Shelah of the tribe of Judah (Numbers 26:20), that they might know their birthplace or ancestral city" (H.C. Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, volume 2, pages 978-79; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI).

Since Er and Onan died without offspring, no further notice is taken of them, however, Shelah lived to have a family, and therefore his birthplace is recorded as at Chezib, or Achzib, in the southern lowlands of Judah (Joshua 15:44; Micah 1:14).

Genesis 38:6-10 presents to us the account of the Lord killing two of Judah's sons, Er and Onan.

Genesis 38:6

"Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar."

Judah arranged the marriage of his firstborn Er with a Canaanite woman whose name was "Tamar," which is the proper noun *Tamar* (rm*T*) (taw-mawr), which means, "palm-tree."

The personal name "Tamar" appears in the Bible only in the Davidic family. Remember, David, like the Lord Jesus Christ came from the tribe of Judah.

In the Biblical world, parents usually arranged marriages. The Israelites were prohibited from intermarrying with Canaanite women since they were under the curse of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27, however, we must remember that this curse was conditional meaning that any Canaanite who placed their faith in the God of Israel, Jesus Christ, could escape it.

An example is Rahab the harlot who was a Canaanite and as we will note, like Rahab, Tamar, a Canaanite woman embraced the faith of Judah, her father-in-law. Usually Canaanite women did "not" embrace the faith of their husbands, but instead seduced their husbands to join their lifestyles (See Genesis 24:4; 26:34-35; 31:50), however, with Tamar, this is not the case.

Tamar will emerge as the heroine of Genesis 38. In fact, Tamar was to be the mother of the Messianic line from Judah and so therefore, she is found in the genealogy of Jesus Christ (See Matthew 1:3). Therefore, Er's marriage to Tamar was according to the will of God.

Genesis 38:7

"But Er, Judah's firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life."

In the original Hebrew text of Genesis 38:7, there is a pun in that Er's name in the Hebrew is the Hebrew word for evil, which is *ra*. This is the first time we see explicitly stated in Scripture that God put someone to death.

"Evil" is the adjective *ra`* (ur^), which refers to an attitude that seeks to live independently of God and expresses itself in disobedience to the laws of God.

Evil is a "viewpoint" and "attitude" that originated with Satan when he rebelled against God and sought to live independently of God (See Isaiah 14:12-14).

There are two viewpoints in all of God's creation: (1) Divine viewpoint based upon the infallible Word of God. (2) Satanic viewpoint based upon

the genius of Satan, which is described in the Bible as evil.

Evil is “independence from God” and is the genius of Satan, which is why Satan is called in Scripture “the evil one.”

1 John 5:19, “We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.”

John 17:15, “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”

2 Thess 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

Ephesians 6:16, “In addition to everything, I solemnly charge all of you to take up for yourselves your shield, which is your faith because that will enable all of you to extinguish all the flaming arrows originating from the evil one.”

All of sin is evil but not all evil is sin. Evil involves both “immoral” and “moral” degeneracy, which is the product of the old sin nature.

“Immoral degeneracy” involves sexual sins, murder, lying, stealing, etc whereas “moral degeneracy” involves human good and self-righteousness.

“Human good” is evil because it is based upon improper motivation from the influence of the old sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan upon the human soul. Human good is the attempt by man to solve his problems apart from the will of God, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God. God hates human good (Isa. 64:6).

Isaiah 64:6, “For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment.”

Both believers and unbelievers produce human good. Human good can include: (1) Humanitarianism (2) Socialism (3) Philanthropy (4) Public welfare (5) Social security (6) Religion (7) Legalism (8) Reversionism (9) Communism (10) Pacifism.

Therefore, evil encompasses not just sin which Christ paid for on the Cross with His

substitutionary spiritual death, but it also encompasses human good. Since evil originates with Satan and is his viewpoint, God permits evil to run its course as part of the angelic conflict until Satan is imprisoned for a thousand years in order that Christ’s millennial reign can take place (Zeph. 3:14-15) and it will be permanently eliminated when Satan is cast into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:7-10).

Evil is located in the soul (Matt. 6:23; 15:19) and shortens life (Amos 5:14-15) and is distinguished from sin (1 Chron. 21:1, 17). The believer is commanded to reject evil (Deut. 13:5; Isa. 1:16; Rom. 12:9, 21; 1 Pet. 3:9; 3 John 11) and only the believer who obeys the Word of God can avoid evil (Gen. 48:16; 1 Sam. 25:39; Job 28:28; Psa. 37:25-27; 84:10; Prov. 16:6, 17; Isa. 59:15; Jer. 9:3; 23:21-22; John 17:15; 1 Cor. 13:5).

Psalms 97:10, “Hate evil, you who love the LORD, who preserves the souls of His godly ones; He delivers them from the hand of the wicked.”

Romans 12:9, “{Let} love {be} without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good.”

Hebrews 3:12, “Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.”

Genesis 38:7

“But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life.”

In Genesis 38:7, the adjective *ra*, “evil” describes Judah’s firstborn son Er as conducting his life independently of God, which expressed itself in disobedience to and rebellion against God.

The Scriptures do “not” reveal what his disobedience entailed, however, the use of the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, “Lord” instead of *Elohim*, “God” indicates that Er was a believer who sinned in relation to His covenant relationship with God.

If Er was an unbeliever, the noun *Elohim*, “God” would be used but instead the Holy Spirit inspired Moses to use the covenant name of God *Yahweh*, “Lord,” which indicates that Er’s sin was in relation to his covenant relationship with God.

The fact that the covenant name of God is used, *Yahweh*, “Lord” indicates that Er was a believer and that he disobeyed God in relation to His covenant relationship with God to the extent that he died the sin unto death.

There are three categories of divine discipline (punishment) for the disobedient child of God: (1) Warning (Rev. 3:20; James 5:9) (2) Intense (Ps. 38:1; 2 Th. 2:11). (3) Dying (Jer. 9:16; 44:12; Phlp. 3:18-19; Re. 3:16; Ps. 118:17-18; 1 Jo. 5:16).

1 John 5:16, 17

“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.”

“All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.”

1 Corinthians 11:23-30

“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread.”

“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”

“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”

“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.”

“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.”

“But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup.”

“For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly.”

“For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.”

“Weak” refers to warning discipline (Rev. 3:20; James 5:9) and “sick” refers to intensive discipline (Psa. 38:1; 2 Thess. 2:11) and “sleep” refers to dying discipline (Jer. 9:16; 44:12; Phil. 3:18-19; Rev. 3:16; 1 Cor. 10:13-14; Ps. 118:17-18; 1 John 5:16).

1 Corinthians 11:31, 32

“But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged.”

“But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”

Examples of the sin unto death: (1) Exodus Generation (1 Cor. 10:1-11). (2) Saul (1 Chron. 10:13). (3) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). (4) Believers in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:30).

Henry M. Morris commenting on the sin of Er, writes, “The most natural inference...is that Er’s wickedness somehow had to do with his position as Judah’s ‘firstborn’ in relation to his presumed spiritual responsibilities. In view of Onan’s specific sin, which later resulted in his death also, it seems most probable that Er’s sin had to do with his refusal to consummate the marriage with Tamar as arranged for him by his father. Judah wanted Tamar as a wife for his son in order that she might produce a son herself, to carry on the Judaic line. Er, however, rebelled against this intention, not wanting to have a wife and son who would follow Jehovah. Consequently, he refused to ‘go in unto’ Tamar. For this overt rebellion against God’s purpose in Israel, ‘the Lord slew him.’ Exactly how the Lord put him to death we are not told, but it was in some way, which clearly tied his death to his own wickedness against God. (The Genesis Record, pages 548-49).

Genesis 38:8

“Then Judah said to Onan, ‘Go in to your brother's wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.’”

Judah then asked Onan after Er died to perform the duty of a brother-in-law by marrying Tamar and raising a child who would be the heir of Er

and carry on his line. This custom was common all through the Middle East in ancient times as the Nuzi tablets show.

Nuzi is about 10 miles southwest of modern Kirkuk in northeastern Iraq. These Hurrian texts included about 5,000 tables from family archives from approximately 1500 B.C. and they give us insight into life in the days of the patriarchs. According to these documents from Nuzi, the custom of a man marrying his dead brother's wife in order to carry on the deceased's life was common in the Middle East.

It is often called Levirate marriage (from the Latin *levir*, "a husband's brother") and was later incorporated into the Mosaic Law (See Deuteronomy 25:5-10) and was practiced into the time of the Lord Jesus (See Matthew 22:23-30; Mark 12:18-25; Luke 20:27-35) and was allowed only when a brother died without leaving any children. Therefore, this custom called for the surviving brother to become a surrogate for the deceased husband who posthumously gained a child, socially acknowledged as being his progeny and heir.

So it was already the custom in the days of the patriarchs that if a man died without children, his next younger brother would marry his wife and have intercourse with her and have children.

The first son from such a marriage would then be recognized legally as the son and heir of the dead brother. Therefore, Judah was not asking Onan to do something that was socially unacceptable or was rejected by God since the custom appears in the Mosaic Law.

Judah had an obligation to Tamar, having contracted with her and her father to marry his son, and no doubt had told her about the spiritual responsibilities and privileges of the Abrahamic Covenant that this would entail.

It appears Tamar agreed to fulfill the responsibilities of being a member of God's covenant people and yet Judah's son Er was not willing, which resulted in his death.

The term "offspring" is the noun *zera`* (ur[^]z#) (zeh-rah), which means, "descendant, offspring" is used almost exclusively in the patriarchal narratives for the "posterity" of Abraham.

Therefore, the term "offspring" indicates that Tamar's child would carry on the Judaic line, which leads to the Messiah and would inherit the promises, privileges, blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic Covenant. The use of this term is further indication that Er rejected his covenant responsibilities to God.

Genesis 38:9

"Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother."

Genesis 38:10

"But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also."

The statement "he (Onan) knew that the offspring would not be his" reveals that Onan disliked the idea of fathering a son who would not be considered legally his child but his brother's.

The statement "he went in to his brother's wife" refers to sexual intercourse and should be translated "whenever he went in to his brother's wife" since the particle *im* (<a!) (eem), which is used as a temporal particle meaning "whenever" is not translated.

Therefore, "every time" that Onan had sexual intercourse with Tamar, he would ejaculate his semen on the ground rather than inside of Tamar and not just once or twice.

The statement "he (Onan) wasted his seed on the ground in order not give offspring to his brother" refers to the fact that during sexual intercourse, Onan ejaculated on the ground rather than ejaculating inside of Tamar in order to prevent his fathering a child who would not be legally considered his.

Onan's refusal to give Tamar a child not only demonstrated a lack of love for his deceased brother but it also revealed Onan's selfish heart that wanted for himself what would have gone to his elder brother's heir.

If Tamar had born him a son, that child would have been the perpetuator of Er's name as well as that of Onan (cf. Ruth 4:5, 21-22). God judged Onan's sin severely because descendants were

important in His plans for the patriarchs. Onan was deliberately frustrating the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to make them fruitful and to multiply their descendants (cf. 11:4). Therefore, the Lord killed Onan "not" because he masturbated or ejaculated on the ground but rather because he deliberately frustrated the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them numerous posterity and to have the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ descend from them.

The term "onanism" has come to be applied to masturbation but it is clear that the Lord did not kill Onan for masturbating but rather for his "motive" in refusing to consummate the marital act with Tamar, which was to frustrate the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (See Genesis 12:1-3; 15:1-6; 17; 22:17-18; 28:10-14; 35:11).

Onan's refusal to impregnate Tamar demonstrated his disobedience in fulfilling his covenant responsibilities to God and frustrated God's purpose to have the nation of Israel and Jesus Christ descend from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Therefore, his actions frustrated God's plan to save and rule the world through the King of Israel, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Next, we will note Genesis 38:11-14, which records that after realizing that Judah had no intention of fulfilling his obligations under the levirate marriage customs, Tamar disguises herself as a temple prostitute in order that she might become pregnant through him.

Genesis 38:11

"Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, 'Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up'; for he thought, 'I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers.' So Tamar went and lived in her father's house."

The phrase "his (Judah's) daughter-in-law" reveals that Judah was obligated contractually to Tamar to provide his son Shelah as a surrogate under the laws pertaining to "Levirate" marriage. However, he violates his daughter-in-law by shirking his responsibilities in providing his son Shelah to

fulfill the requirements pertaining to the laws of "Levirate" marriage.

Judah's statement, "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up" is a promise to Tamar that he will give his son Shelah in order to fulfill his contractual obligation to her in regards to "Levirate" marriage customs.

The statement "for he thought, 'I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers'" reveals that the promise is a lie and hypocrisy on the part of Judah.

Judah's promise "Remain a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up" was hypocrisy because it was a pretense of having concern for Tamar, which he did not possess as revealed in the statement "for he thought, 'I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers.'"

Judah fails to see that the Lord killed his two sons because they were evil themselves in that they refused to fulfill their covenantal responsibilities to God and so it appears that Judah is superstitious in that he considers Tamar a wife who brings bad luck.

Tamar was not free to remarry since under the laws of Levirate marriage, her father-in-law was to provide his son Shelah as a surrogate. She goes back to her father's house in Adullam fully assuming that Judah would provide his only surviving son as a surrogate and she was subject to the authority of her father-in-law. Therefore, Judah sinned against Tamar by forcing her to live as a widow.

We must remember though that Judah did want a grandson who would carry on his family line and patriarchal leadership. It appears that Judah did not know what to do and so he simply deferred his decision and sent Tamar back to her father in Adullam hoping that this would cause her to forget the whole matter so that he would not have to have Shelah marry her.

Genesis 38:12

"Now after a considerable time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite."

The phrase “after a considerable time” in the original Hebrew text is literally, “the days increased” or we would say, “after many days” and refers to an unspecified amount of time that was at least long enough to demonstrate that Judah had no intention of allowing Shelah to marry Tamar.

Sometime after Tamar left Judah’s home, another death takes place in Judah’s family this time it is his wife whose name is not identified in this passage due to God’s disapproval of her. She must have been a relatively young woman because Judah could hardly have been more than forty. It appears that like her sons, her death may also have been a judgment from the Lord reflecting her own responsibility in the training of Er and Onan and their resulting attitudes of rebellion against God.

The notice that Judah’s wife dies helps explain why he consorts with a prostitute (Compare with 1 Corinthians 7:2-6) but by no means justifies his actions. It also helps us to understand why Tamar took matters into her own hands and defends her actions against possible accusation of threatening Judah’s home (Compare Matthew 19:9).

“The time of mourning” would last seven days after the burial and would involve loud wailing, short cries of sorrow for someone as well as the tearing of clothes, wearing sackcloth, a coarse and uncomfortable material worn next to the skin (2 Sam. 3:31), fasting (2 Sam. 1:12) and beating one’s breast (Isa. 32:12). These actions were considered appropriate signifying anguish in the ancient world.

Then, our text says that Judah went with his Canaanite friend Hirah to see his sheepshearers in Timnah. If you recall, “Hirah” according to Genesis 38:12 and 20, was a friend of Judah and was a citizen of the city of Adullam, which was approximately 3 miles southwest of Bethlehem and 8 miles northwest of Hebron. He was a bad influence upon Judah since he was a Canaanite and the Canaanites were immoral degenerates and under a divine curse as prophesied by Noah in Genesis 9:24-27.

Sheep shearing was an annual event carried out in the spring and entailed large numbers of men working at great distances from their homes for an extended period of time. It also involved not only

the work itself but also involved partying and celebration and the consumption of great amounts of alcohol (See 1 Samuel 25:2-37; 2 Samuel 13:23-28), which helps to explain Judah’s actions in consorting with a prostitute in that alcohol breaks down one’s norms and standards.

“Timnah” is the proper noun *timnah* (חנ*מ+ת!) (tim-naw), which means, “an assigned or allotted portion” and was approximately 10 miles west of Bethlehem and 5 miles west of Adullam.

Many archaeologists identify it with Tel el Batashi, about four miles west-northwest of Beth-Shemesh. Some commentators contend that the Timnah mentioned in Genesis 38:12 was located in the southern part of the tribal territory of Judah (Josh. 15:57). However, this does not fit so well with the location of “Enaim,” which is described in Genesis 38:14 as on the road to Timnah (38:14), which is in the northern part of Judah’s territory (Josh. 15:34).

Genesis 38:13

“It was told to Tamar, ‘Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.’”

Tamar is still waiting for Judah to fulfill his contractual obligations to her in providing Shelah as a surrogate to carry on the name of his brothers, Er and Onan and so that Tamar can be the mother of the Judaic line. But as we noted Judah had no intention of giving Shelah to Tamar because he feared the Lord would kill him. Therefore, Tamar was being unfairly treated as though it were her fault that Judah’s sons died when in reality they died because of their own rebellion against the Lord.

Undoubtedly, she was not very happy being back in her father’s home and her father could not have been happy with Judah as well since he was renegeing on his contractual obligations and not fulfilling the requirements under the Levirate marriage customs.

The fact that it was told to Tamar that Judah was going up to Timnah to take part in the festivities indicates that she had spies watching out for Judah. She now knows that Judah had no intention of fulfilling his contractual obligations to her.

Remember, Tamar is a believer since Matthew 1:3 and Ruth 4:18 record her being in the genealogy of Jesus Christ and so like Rahab, Tamar was a Canaanite woman who believed in God's covenant promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Matthew 1:1-3

"The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac, Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers."

"Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar."

So she wanted to be a part of God's plan and to become the mother of the Judaic line as Judah had evidently promised her, which was the line of Christ. Therefore, we see Tamar becoming desperate, deciding if she was ever going to become the mother of the Judaic line as Judah had promised her, it would have to be accomplished outside of an actual marriage relationship with Judah's son. She would have to arrange for Shelah, or perhaps even Judah himself, to have intercourse with her without realizing it since he would never do so intentionally.

Genesis 38:14

"So she removed her widow's garments and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife."

The fact that Tamar was still wearing widow's garments beyond the usual period of mourning was her way of demonstrating publicly that Judah had not fulfilled his levirate obligation.

Remember, Judah had finished mourning over his wife and here is Tamar still in mourning clothes when her husband had died before Judah's wife and so we can see that the wearing of the widow clothes was a public protest against Judah. Tamar takes off the widow's garments and puts on the attire of a temple prostitute hoping that when Judah saw her that he would employ her "services" as a prostitute and thus give her the long-awaited opportunity to become the mother of his successors in the Judaic line.

Now, we must understand and emphasize that Tamar is disguising herself as a temple prostitute rather than a common harlot. The Canaanites made a distinction between a temple prostitute and a common whore since the former they considered to be a legitimate part of their society since it was an essential element of the Canaanite religion.

In Genesis 38:21-22, Judah's Canaanite friend describes Tamar with the noun *qadhesh* (vd@q*) (kaw-dashe), "a cult prostitute, dedicated to cultic prostitution" clearly indicating that Tamar was posing as a temple prostitute rather than a common harlot (Compare with Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22).

Judah who was of course an Israelite and not a Canaanite describes Tamar with the verb *zanah* (hn*w*) (zaw-naw), which denotes "the act of committing prostitution," or "to act as a prostitute" indicating that he recognized Tamar as a common harlot.

Also indicating that the Canaanite men viewed Tamar's attire as that of a temple prostitute rather than a common harlot was that she wore a veil. According to Middle Assyrian law (ca. 1200 B.C.), the daughters, wives and concubines of free Assyrian males, as well as sacred prostitutes had to be veiled in public but a whore must not veil herself. The penalty was severe if a common whore did veil herself in that she would be flogged fifty times with staves and would have pitch poured on her head.

The fact that Tamar was veiled would indicate that she was disguising herself as a temple prostitute rather than a common whore and would help to conceal her identity from Judah.

Now, we must understand the profession of a temple prostitute in the days of Tamar and Judah was considered respectable but of course this is not to justify her actions since the Word of God condemns prostitution (See Leviticus 19:29; 21:14; Deuteronomy 22:21).

Leviticus 19:29, "Do not profane your daughter by making her a harlot, so that the land will not fall to harlotry and the land become full of lewdness."

In many ancient religious systems, all the women of the community were expected to devote

themselves on occasion to this practice as an actual votive offering to their pagan gods and goddesses. Male and female prostitutes were tied closely to pagan concepts of fertility religion, which included imitative or sympathetic magic. Through intercourse with the devotees of the gods, the worshippers believed that they influenced the gods to grant them fertility and increase in their families, lands and crops. Male and female prostitutes were the central feature of the Canaanite fertility religion, which were outlawed under the Mosaic Law (See Deuteronomy 23:17).

Deuteronomy 23:17, “None of the daughters of Israel shall be a cult prostitute, nor shall any of the sons of Israel be a cult prostitute.”

Judah does “not” make a distinction between a temple prostitute and a common whore though his friend Hirah, who was a Canaanite, does make a distinction. This indicates that the Canaanites considered temple prostitution legitimate, which is totally in contradiction to God’s standards as recorded in Scripture.

The Scriptures warn against becoming involved with prostitutes (See Proverbs 7). The Bible warns that a prostitute can cause a man to become destitute according to Proverbs 6:26, that a prostitute is a deep ditch according to Proverbs 23:27 and that the one who keeps company with prostitutes wastes his wealth according to Proverbs 29:3.

Genesis 38:14 records that Tamar “sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah,” which would enable her to cross paths with Judah since she knew that he would have to pass by there in order to get to Timnah.

“Enaim” is the proper noun *enayim* (<y!n^yu@), which means, “double spring” and was identified as being on the road to Timnah, which was in the northern part of the territory of Judah according to Joshua 15:34.

The fact that Tamar saw that Shelah had grown up and yet had not been given to her by Judah demonstrated to her that he had no intention of fulfilling his contractual obligation to her and helps us to understand her actions in disguising herself as a temple prostitute, which by no means justifies her actions.

Shelah is never mentioned again in Scripture but only his clan is noted in Numbers 26:20 and it is recorded that one of his sons was named Er according to 1 Chronicles 4:21.

The fact that Tamar disguises herself as a temple prostitute reveals that Judah consorted regularly with prostitutes since she was convinced that if she could only look like a prostitute, Judah would take things from there and that her purposes would be realized.

The fact that Judah regularly used prostitutes is further indicated in that he does not manifest any of the naivety of one who is new at this sort of thing and in fact handled the arrangements like an experienced man of the world as recorded in Genesis 38:15-19.

In Genesis 38:15-19, we will see Tamar successfully deceiving Judah into thinking that she was a prostitute, which enables her to get pregnant through him.

Genesis 38:15

“When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face.”

The fact that Tamar positioned herself in the gateway to Enaim, which was on the way to Timnah where Judah was heading to see his flocks with his Canaanite buddy Hirah was “not” a shot in the dark since she knew what took place during sheep shearing season, namely, partying and drinking and fornicating. The moral atmosphere of the annual sheep-shearing might best be understood when compared to a group of men getting off of work and heading to the strip bar to pour down a few frosties and say hello to the girls.

Just picture a group of hard-working shepherds finishing an exhausting, hot, and thirsty week among the sheep, leaving the fields after having completed this annual task. Suddenly the call goes out, “It’s party time!” With a girl in one arm and a Budweiser in the other, the celebration begins.

Tamar knew well that this was the kind of thing that took place at sheep-shearing season. Not only did she know men in general, but she knew Judah very well. Judah appears to be an “immoral” degenerate meaning moral purity does not seem to be one of his virtues.

In Genesis 38:15, Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit makes clear to us that if Judah knew the identity of Tamar, he would never had sex with her since the veil over her face prevented him from identifying her.

Genesis 38:16

“So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, ‘Here now, let me come in to you’; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, ‘What will you give me, that you may come in to me?’”

The statement “let me come in to you” is a euphemism for sexual intercourse.

Tamar’s statement “What will you give me that you may come in to me?” identifies her as a prostitute since she is asking Judah what he would give her if she let him have sex with her.

Judah knew what he was doing when he asked to have sex with the woman who he does not know is Tamar. He knew that having sex with her was a part of the Canaanite religion and that the Canaanites would consider that he was doing this as an act of worship to one of their gods or goddesses. However, he did not know that the woman he approached was his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Therefore, we see that Judah is not only soliciting a prostitute, which is prohibited by God but also he is involved in the idolatrous practices of the Canaanites, which is also prohibited by God in the Mosaic Law (See Genesis 9:24-27; Exodus 23:23-24; Deuteronomy 7:1-11; 20:17-18; .

In Genesis 38:16, the narrator is emphasizing to the reader that Judah is not consciously committing incest and adultery (See Leviticus 18:15), thus assuring the legitimacy of the birth of Tamar’s twins, Perez and Zerah.

Genesis 38:17

“He said, therefore, ‘I will send you a young goat from the flock.’ She said, moreover, ‘Will you give a pledge until you send it?’”

Judah’s statement “I will send you a young goat from the flock” reveals that he is acting on impulse rather than from a premeditated plan to sleep with a prostitute since if he had planned to do so he would have been prepared to pay her at that time.

“Pledge” is the noun *eravon* (/w{br*U@) (aw-rav-vone), which was a type of modern-day deposit, which Judah would get back when he provided at a later date the young goat as payment.

Genesis 38:18

“He said, ‘What pledge shall I give you?’ And she said, ‘Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand.’ So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him.”

Judah’s words and actions with Tamar, whom he thinks is a temple prostitute reveals that this wasn’t his first encounter with a prostitute. He demonstrates that he is “not” new at this sort of thing since he handled the arrangements like an experienced man of the world. Tamar was convinced that if she could only look like a prostitute, Judah would take things from there and that her purposes would be realized.

Very smoothly, Judah negotiated terms acceptable to both parties. It was probably common practice to ask for some kind of pledge since little could be done to force the “client” to pay after the fact. Judah was therefore not taken back by Tamar’s insistence that some guarantee be given. Not that Tamar had any interest in payment. She wanted only to become pregnant by Judah. But the pledge that was given would serve to demonstrate at a later time when she is found to be pregnant and unmarried, that Judah was the father of the child that was conceived from their sexual union.

“Seal” is the noun *chotham* (<†*W{j) (kho-thawm), which refers to a “seal” or “signet ring” used for identification and was worn on a cord around the neck and was the insignia of a prominent rich man and identified the owner and/or sender of the object.

Seals were made of semiprecious stones, gold, ivory, limestone, clay, bone or metal and could be carried in a pouch and were often part of a ring and worn on the hand, or a necklace or bracelet. The markings on the seal may have included religious pictures or symbols, geometric designs, names or titles. The distinctive elements of each seal identified its owner much like the image of a branding iron identifies the owner of the cattle. Scarabs, seals in the shape of a beetle, were

popular in Egypt but cylinders and items used for stamping were popular in various parts of the Middle East.

Cylinder seals emerged at the end of the fourth millennium B.C. and stamp seals are attested by 2600 B.C. Cylinders were rolled soft clay or wax, leaving their impression behind and the same was done with stamps and scarabs. The impression was like leaving a signature, which gave identification, authentication and authorization.

Judah's seal was unique to him and identified him as a prominent rich man and he would therefore immediately recognize it as his own and the same was true of the staff.

"Staff" is the noun *matteh* (מַטֵּה) (mat-teh), which was a symbol of authority and that one held a position of leadership and would also be practically useful and would have Judah's mark of ownership etched on top of it.

Possession of Judah's seal and staff gave Tamar proof of the identity of the father of her child when he was born. Therefore, we see that Tamar is very smart by asking for something very personal from Judah, his very own seal and staff, which today would be like a man giving his credit card and license.

So he gave Tamar these things and proceeded to have sex with her and as a result she became pregnant by him. Judah was willing to part with these valuable items temporarily only because he was a rich man and for him the payment of a young goat was inexpensive and could have been accomplished with ease in a very short while.

Genesis 38:19

"Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow's garments."

The fact that after having sex with Judah, Tamar removes the veil and put her widow's garments back on indicates clearly that her motive for having sex with Judah was not lust or money but rather to ensure her place in God's covenant family, for which she had so longed but which it seemed was about to be denied her.

Tamar's actions in disguising herself as a prostitute in order to deceive Judah into having sex with her so that she might get pregnant by him

was totally against the will of God since God prohibits deception and prostitution. Though Tamar's motive for her actions was commendable, the means that she employed to accomplish her purpose, namely, deception and prostitution, were totally wrong and against the will of God.

Though she was denied justice by Judah, she was "not" justified in deceiving him into thinking that she was a temple prostitute and then soliciting him to have sex with her since deception and prostitution are against the will of God. The ends does "not" justify the means.

On the other hand, Judah's actions were obviously not according to the will of God since he did "not" fulfill his contractual obligations to Tamar by withholding his youngest son Shelah from perpetuating the name of Tamar's husband and his oldest son, Er.

Furthermore, his actions in soliciting who he thought was a temple prostitute was in essence taking part in the Canaanite religion and idolatry, which was against the will of God. Even though Judah was grieving over the death of his wife and was a widower, who had no outlet for his sexual desires, he was not justified in soliciting who he thought was a temple prostitute.

In His omniscience, God figured into His plan, the bad decisions of Judah and Tamar, which were against His will in order to manifest His grace, and forgiveness.

God treated Judah and Tamar according to His grace policy meaning He treated both of them in a manner that they did not deserve by forgiving them their sins of deception, involvement in prostitution and idolatry by blessing them with twins so that the Savior could come into the world and fulfill the Father's plan of salvation.

This sordid affair between Judah and Tamar is a classic example of the function of the "permissive," "directive" and "overruling" will of God. The "directive" will of God refers to what God directly requires of an individual, His "permissive" will refers to Him "permitting" His creatures to act contrary to what He desires and His "overruling" will refers to the fact that at times God "overrules" the bad decisions of His creatures in order to perpetuate His plan.

The “directive” will of God prohibited Judah and Tamar from becoming involved with deception and prostitution however God “permitted” their decisions to take place that were contrary to His “directive” will.

Judah deceived Tamar into thinking that he was going to give her his youngest son Shelah as a husband when he got older whereas Tamar deceived Judah into thinking that she was a temple prostitute and Tamar functioned as a prostitute and Judah unknowingly solicited her. God “permitted” Judah and Tamar to make these decisions, which were against His “directive” will.

He also “overruled” their bad decisions in that He overruled Judah’s bad decision in deceiving Tamar and treating her unjustly by “permitting” her to deceive him into thinking that she was a temple prostitute, which thus led to Judah unknowingly getting Tamar pregnant! God “overruled” Judah’s bad decisions of refusing to allow Tamar to perpetuate the Judaic line and become a part of God’s covenant people as well as being in the line of Christ by permitting Tamar’s deception to be successful, thus perpetuating His plan to have Tamar continue the line of Christ.

Genesis 38:20-26 gives us the account of Judah discovering that Tamar had deceived him into thinking she was a temple prostitute and that he had gotten her pregnant.

Genesis 38:20

“When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman's hand, he did not find her.”

So we see Tamar disguising herself as a temple prostitute in order that she might deceive Judah into having sex with her so that she could become a part of the Judaic line. As we saw in Genesis 38:17, Judah and Tamar agreed that the payment for her providing him with sex would be a young goat, which he did not have at the time with him.

Judah sends his Adullamite friend with the young goat so that he can get back his seal or signet ring, cord and staff. However, Judah’s Adullamite friend cannot find her of course since Tamar was only disguising herself as a temple prostitute in order to deceive Judah into having sex with her so that she could take part in the Judaic line.

Notice how Judah is anxious to fulfill his contractual obligations with a prostitute and yet he refuses to fulfill his contractual obligations with his own daughter-in-law by withholding his son Shelah from Tamar.

The fact that Judah sends his Adullamite friend with the young goat to pay a prostitute instead of doing it himself indicates that he was a bit embarrassed in that he consorted with a prostitute.

Genesis 38:21

“He asked the men of her place, saying, ‘Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?’ But they said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’”

Genesis 38:22

“So he returned to Judah, and said, ‘I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’”

Genesis 38:23

“Then Judah said, ‘Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her.’”

The fact that Judah’s Adullamite friend Hirah did not find a “temple prostitute” and, worse yet, was told that there had never been a temple prostitute ever in that area, placed Judah in a very awkward and potentially embarrassing position. It appears that Tamar disguised as a temple prostitute had gotten the best of him, but he was powerless to do anything about it since who would ever report a theft to the authorities under such delicate circumstances. The more he sought to find this woman, the more his consorting with a prostitute would become public knowledge.

Judah is like a reputable businessman who unwittingly “loses” his credit card in a brothel! A prostitute running off with his valuable possessions makes him look like a fool for entrusting them to her but notice only his reputation concerns him. Therefore, since Judah had no desire to become the laughingstock of the town, he calls off the search for the prostitute so as not to advertise his consorting with a prostitute.

Genesis 38:24

“Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, ‘Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry.’ Then Judah said, ‘Bring her out and let her be burned!’”

The charge against Tamar that she had gotten pregnant through prostitution is an accurate charge and not hearsay since this is exactly what she did. The fact that her involvement in prostitution was public knowledge reveals that Tamar did not hide the fact that she dressed up as a temple prostitute the day she solicited Judah, just like she publicly protested Judah’s treatment of her by remaining in widow’s garments beyond the usual period of mourning.

Evidently, Tamar did “not” make it a secret when she walked out of her father’s house dressed as a temple prostitute in order to facilitate a confrontation with Judah when it became clear that she was pregnant.

Technically, Tamar was still under Judah’s authority since she is engaged to Judah’s only surviving son Shelah. Therefore, for her to have sex with someone else other than Shelah was tantamount to adultery, which under the Mosaic Law, which was not yet given at the time, was punishable by death (See Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22).

When Judah receives information that Tamar had become involved with prostitution and as a result of this became pregnant, he jumps at the opportunity to rid himself of her by demanding her execution.

Judah’s demand for Tamar’s execution since it violated the laws of God was hypocrisy because it was a pretense of having concern for the laws of God, which he did not possess as demonstrated by his consorting with a prostitute and subsequent involvement in idolatry. It was hypocrisy in that his real motive for demanding the execution of Tamar was so he would not have to fulfill his contractual obligation to her under the Levirate marriage customs to provide his son Shelah to carry on his brother’s name. He is playing the part of an outraged citizen when in fact he is an immoral degenerate who fails to keep his

obligations to a widow and who cares for no one but himself and his reputation! His hypocrisy is demonstrated in that he is quick to condemn Tamar for prostitution and have her executed, yet he himself consorted with prostitutes!

Judah demands that Tamar be burned, however according to the Mosaic Law, which was not yet given, the penalty of burning was only applicable for the case of the high priest’s daughter becoming involved in prostitution (See Deuteronomy 22:20-24; Leviticus 21:9). The penalty for adultery during the engagement period in a case similar to Tamar’s was stoning according to Deuteronomy 22:21. Therefore, the fact that Judah calls for Tamar to be burned rather than stoned is extreme since Judah’s sentence was harsher than the subsequent law, whether according to patriarchal custom, or on other grounds, cannot be determined. He is a severe judge in a case where he is equally criminal.

Genesis 38:25

“It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, ‘I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.’ And she said, ‘Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?’”

Genesis 38:26

“Judah recognized them, and said, ‘She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.’ And he did not have relations with her again.”

The phrase “while she was being brought” refers to her being escorted to the place of execution.

“She sent” is the verb *shalach* (שׁלַח) (shaw-lakh), which refers to “persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers.”

Therefore, when Tamar was brought out for execution, she sent messengers to Judah bearing the three articles of pledge informing him that they belonged to the man who had gotten her pregnant.

Judah then admitted she was more righteous than he in the sense that not only was he guilty of becoming involved with prostitutes and idolatry but he also failed to keep his contractual obligations to Tamar by failing to give his son Shelah to be her husband.

Just as his father Jacob reaped what he sowed when he was deceived by Laban on his wedding night and Laban reaped what he sowed when deceived by his daughter Rachel, so Judah reaped what he sowed when he was deceived by Tamar.

Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

The fact that when confronted with his failure and deception, he owns up to his sin reveals that he is taking responsibility for his actions and is not getting involved in the blame game.

Just as King David confessed his sin of committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering Uriah when confronted by Nathan the prophet (See 2 Samuel 11:1-12:13) so also Judah’s true character emerges with his confession. Therefore, just as the Lord forgave David when he confessed his sins so also Judah was forgiven by God when he confessed his.

Psalms 32:5, “I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah.”

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

The statement “he (Judah) did not have relations with her again” reveals to the reader that Judah was not guilty of incest.

Evidently, Judah learned his lesson and marks the beginning of his character transformation since the next time we read of him he is back with his brothers and father taking a leadership role in the family.

The biographical sketches that appear in Genesis reveal that character transformation is the essence of the book. For example, Abram becomes Abraham; Jacob becomes Israel, Reuben, violator of his father’s concubine, later prevents the murder of Joseph and shows great concern for both Joseph and his father. Then, there is Joseph, the tattler and arrogant boaster who becomes the wise statesman who forgives his brothers. Therefore,

Genesis 38 plays an important role in clarifying the course of the account of Jacob’s sons that is recorded in Genesis 37:2-50:26.

We come to the close of our study of Genesis 38 by noting Genesis 38:27-30, which records Tamar giving birth to twins who she names Perez and Zerah. Genesis 38:27-30 would be of great interest to the descendants of Judah since it records the birth of Judah’s sons through Tamar. This final section of Genesis 38 provides the significance of the entire chapter, namely that the line of Judah continued because God gave Tamar twins by Judah.

God enabled and permitted Judah to unknowingly impregnate Tamar. Remember, the human nature of Jesus Christ is from the tribe of Judah.

Hebrews 7:14, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.”

Revelation 5:5, “And one of the elders said to me (apostle John), ‘Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome so as to open the book and its seven seals.’”

Genesis 38:27

“It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb.”

Genesis 38:28

“Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, ‘This one came out first.’”

Genesis 38:29

“But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, ‘What a breach you have made for yourself!’ So he was named Perez.”

Genesis 38:30

“Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet thread on his hand; and he was named Zerah.”

The phrase “it came about at the time she was giving birth” refers to the ninth month of Tamar’s pregnancy, six months after Judah discovers that he has gotten Tamar pregnant since Genesis 38:24

records that three months after Tamar conceived by Judah, that it became known that she was pregnant out of wedlock.

Unlike Rebekah who received revelation from the Lord regarding her pregnancy that she would have twins, Tamar does “not” receive divine revelation regarding her pregnancy and was therefore, not anticipating having twins. However, in both pregnancies, there is a great conflict between the twins at birth with both fighting to be born first and in both instances, the older twin eventually takes second place to the younger (See Genesis 25:24-26). The reader is told that Tamar is carrying twins but she is never told unlike Rebekah who was told by God that she was carrying twins.

It is interesting that Judah lost his first two sons, Er and Onan because of their involvement with evil and attempting to hinder God’s plan for the family of Jacob and His plan to bring in the Savior of the world. Therefore, the fact that Tamar is carrying twins would be a sign to Judah that God has forgiven him as a result of his confession of guilt in his unjust treatment of Tamar and is being gracious by giving him two sons to replace the two he lost.

Also, the fact that Tamar is carrying twins would be a sign to her that God was being gracious to her by compensating her for the lack of children from her first two husbands, Er and Onan.

God is treating both Judah and Tamar according to His grace policy since both have failed miserably. Grace is all that God is free to do for human beings in imparting unmerited blessings to them based upon their faith in the merits of the Person and Work of Christ on the Cross whose arrival was still yet in the future in the days of the patriarchs.

God treated Judah and Tamar according to His grace policy meaning He treated both of them in a manner that they did not deserve by forgiving them their sins of deception, involvement in prostitution and idolatry by blessing them with twins so that the Savior could come into the world and fulfill the Father’s plan of salvation. God treated Judah and Tamar in grace in the sense that He gave them the distinct honor and privilege of being in the line of Christ.

“Scarlet thread” is the adjective *shani* (yn!v*) (shaw-nee), which refers to the vivid crimson or scarlet dye used to color thread in the ancient world and was made from the eggs of the shield louse, which attaches itself to the leaves and twigs of the oak tree.

This scarlet thread does “not” indicate that the child was in the line of Christ but rather was used by Tamar’s midwife to identify her firstborn, to whom the rights and honors of primogeniture would belong. But surprisingly, the child with the scarlet thread tied to his hand did not emerge first since he drew his hand back and the head of the other child forged ahead and came out first.

The name of the child that was identified with the scarlet thread as the firstborn was *zrach* (jr^z#) (zeh-rakh), “Zerah,” which literally means, “he dawned” and whose descendants were later called “Zarhites.”

Even though the midwife used the scarlet thread to identify this child as the firstborn, God considered Perez the firstborn as demonstrated in that he always appears before Zerah in the genealogical lists (See Genesis 46:12; Numbers 26:20-21; Matthew 1:3).

The name of the other child was *perets* (Jr#P#) (peh-rets), “Perez,” which means, “a bursting forth, a breach” signifying the abnormally violent manner in which this child was born.

The ancestral lines of both King David are traced back through Perez according to Ruth 4:18-22 as well as the human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33.

Ruth 4:18-22, “Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.”

Matthew 1:1-3

“The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham: Abraham was the father of Isaac,

Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers.”

“Judah was the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar.”

So we see that Zerah stuck his hand out first, however, Perez emerged first, which took the midwife by surprise.

There is a fascinating parallel between the birth of Rebekah’s twin boys and those of Tamar. In the case of Rebekah’s twins, the firstborn, Esau, came out with a reddish color, which along with the red lentil soup for which he sold his birthright was the occasion for his nickname, Edom. Esau’s twin brother Jacob held on to his heel as he emerged from the womb and even though he was not firstborn, he was to continue the line of Christ.

In the case of Tamar’s twins, Zerah whose hand appeared first was likewise marked with a scarlet or red color thread but he was “not” in the line of Christ but rather Perez who actually did come out first was selected by God.

So we see that Tamar had the great distinction of being one of the few women whose names are listed in the official genealogy of Jesus Christ (See Matthew 1:3). The others were Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite (See Matthew 1:5-6).

The fact that each of these four women were Gentiles or “non” Jews who had accepted the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their Savior and God was a tribute to the grace of God.

Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites, Ruth was a Moabite, and Bathsheba was a Hittite, which was a branch of the Canaanites. Each of these four women came into the family of Judah by immoral means or were involved in some sort of immorality before becoming a believer or after becoming a believer.

Rahab was involved in prostitution when she became a believer in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and hid the spies of Israel. Ruth was a descendant of Moab who was the son of the incestuous relationship between Lot and his oldest daughter. She persuaded Boaz to marry her by spending the night with him as he slept drunk on the threshing floor. Bathsheba was a Hittite (either

by marriage with Uriah or by birth) and became David’s wife through adultery and after David had Uriah killed on the battlefield. As we saw, Tamar posed as a prostitute in order to become pregnant by Judah.

Despite the immoral means by which they became a part of God’s covenant people, Israel, each one of these women became a faithful believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, God rewarded the faith of these women by giving them the great honor of being in the genealogical line of the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Also, Rahab who was the most immoral of them all because her profession was prostitution was actually included in God’s Hall of Fame of Faith in Hebrews 11 (See Hebrews 11:31). So not only was Judah the recipient of the grace of God and a trophy of the grace of God but also these four women are trophies of the grace of God and is a testimony to the truth that God rewards faith in Christ by forgiving past sins and giving eternal life!

The story of Judah and Tamar emphasizes the need for God to temporarily relocate Jacob’s family to Egypt. Spiritual purity was essential for the purposes of God to be realized.

Judah, the son through whom the Messiah would be born (Genesis 49:8-12), was so cosmic and immoral that he was willing to marry a Canaanite woman, to have a Canaanite as his best friend and to become involved with prostitutes, leading to idolatry.

The Lord had to do something drastic and the exile in Egypt was God’s remedy since the Egyptians detested Hebrew shepherds (See Genesis 43:32; 46:34), even if the Hebrews were to become involved with these people, the Egyptians would not even consider such a thing. The racial bigotry of the Egyptians towards Hebrew shepherds would serve to maintain the Israelites as a separate people. Even though the Israelites exile in Egypt was in many respects a bitter experience for them, it was a gracious act on the part of God.

When the Israelites read the account of Judah in Genesis 38 it would humble them since their roots were far from admirable but in fact were disgraceful. They could never look back at their

ancestry with any feelings of superiority and racial pride since they had too many skeletons in their closet but rather would have to acknowledge that the existence of their nation was the direct result of the grace of God.

Genesis 39

Genesis 39:1 briefly summarizes Genesis 37:36, and marks a transition from Joseph being “sold” to Potiphar to being “bought” by him, all of which takes place after the parenthetical Genesis 38.

Genesis 39:1 is called a “Janus” section, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after.

Therefore, Genesis 39:1 forms a transition from the account of Joseph being sold by the Midianites to Potiphar as recorded in Genesis 37:36 to the account of Joseph in Potiphar’s house as recorded in Genesis 39:1-20 and sets the stage for the first scene in this account. Genesis 39:1 shifts the setting of the story of Jacob and his family from Canaan to Egypt and from Joseph’s brothers and the Midianites to Joseph and Potiphar.

Genesis 39:1

“Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.”

The name “Joseph” ([s@w]y) (yoseph) literally means, “He adds,” which is a play on the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*], “to add” and is also a prayer for another child, foreshadowing the birth of Benjamin.

“Joseph” was the eleventh son of Jacob that was born in Paddan Aram and he was the first child that Rachel bore to Jacob according to Genesis 30:22-24.

Joseph’s life is divided into three segments: (1) Birth to Seventeen Years of Age (Genesis 30:24-37:2) (2) Seventeen to Thirty Years of Age (Genesis 37:2-41:46) (3) Thirty Years to Death (Genesis 41:46-50:26).

“Egypt” is the proper noun *mitsrayim* (<y!r^x+m!) (mits-ra-yim), which means, “double straits.”

Genesis 10:6 records that “Mizraim” was the second son of Ham and was the ancestor of the ancient Egyptians as indicated in that his name was the customary name for Egypt in the Bible.

Ancient Egypt was divided into three geographical sections: (1) Upper Egypt in the south (2) Middle Egypt in the center (3) Lower Egypt or Delta in the north.

Upper Egypt is very narrow and surrounded by mountains, which rarely take the form of peaks and the northern coast of Egypt is low and barren, and without good harbors.

The political history of Egypt traditionally begins with Menes, the Upper ruler who conquered Lower Egypt according to Egyptian tradition. The history of dynastic Egypt can be divided into the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (2100-1800 B.C.) and the New Kingdom (1550-1069 B.C.). The pyramids were built during the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom coincides with the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph whereas the birth of Moses and Exodus of Israel took place during the New Kingdom.

Eugene H. Merrill provides us an insightful comment regarding the time that Joseph lived in Egypt in relation to the Pharaohs of Egypt, he writes the following: “Joseph was born in 1916 B.C., entered Egypt in 1899 B.C., rose to power in 1886, and died in 1806 at the age of 110. His whole lifespan was contemporaneous with the magnificent Dynasty 12 of Middle Kingdom Egypt, a dynasty which commenced in 1991 and ended in 1786 B.C. Though the chronology of this period is notoriously difficult to reconstruct, the *Cambridge Ancient History* dates used here cannot be far off. By this system of reckoning Joseph was sold into Egypt in the closing years of the reign of Ammenemes II (1929-1895). His was a peaceful reign characterized by an improved agricultural and economic life and by the fostering of close relationships with western Asia. Joseph would have been welcomed on the basis of his ethnic background. His imprisonment would have occurred under Sesostri II (1897-1878), approximately a decade after his arrival in Egypt

(1889). It was Sesostri II whose dreams Joseph interpreted and whom he served as prime minister. It is significant that Sesostri II was in power at the time the nomarch of Beni Hasan welcomed the Semitic chieftain Abisha to his city, an event celebrated in the famous murals of Beni Hasan. Sesostri also imported and employed great numbers of Asiatic slaves and mercenaries, a policy, which shows anything but an anti-Semitic bias. Most striking of all perhaps were the massive land-reclamation and flood-control projects undertaken under the administration of this enlightened monarch. A principal feature of these was a canal dug to connect the Fayyum basin with the Nile, a canal whose ruins to this very day bear the name Bahr Yusef, "the River of Joseph." Can it be that this name survives as a testimony to the contribution of Joseph to the public works projects of Sesostri II?" (Kingdom of Priests, pages 49-50, Baker Book House).

"Potiphar" is the proper noun *potiphar* (rO^yf!w)O (po-tee-far), which is the shortened form of the Egyptian name *Potiphara*, which means, "he whom Ra (the sun-god) has given."

The occupation of "Potiphar" is identified in Genesis 37:36 as "Pharaoh's officer, the captain of the bodyguard" and "an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard."

"Pharaoh" is the proper noun *par`oh* (hU)r+P^ (Hebrew: par-o) (English: phay-row), which means, "great house" and was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. The term was originally used to describe the palace of the king but around 1500 B.C. this term was applied to the Egyptian kings and meant something like "his honor, his majesty."

"Officer" is the noun *saris* (syr!s*), which refers to either court officials or to literal eunuchs and is regarded as a loanword from Akkadian referring to a high-ranking court official, which in early biblical literature appears to be the meaning. However, in later times, the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians adopted the practice of castrating those who served in the royal palace and the harems. Consequently, the term came to mean "eunuch" meaning a castrated male, thus one who is sexually impotent.

Kings did not wish to risk a son of a servant being an heir to the throne. Potiphar was an officer of Pharaoh, yet he had a wife, thus clearly indicating that he was not castrated and therefore, not a eunuch. Therefore, the expressions "Pharaoh's officer" (*s`ris par`oh*) and "an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh" (*s`ris par`oh sar hattabbachim`ish mitsri*) refer to the fact that Potiphar was a "high ranking official" under Pharaoh of Egypt.

The expression "the captain of the bodyguard" defines Potiphar's role as a high ranking official under Pharaoh of Egypt.

"Bodyguard" is the noun *tabbach* (jB^f^ (tab-bawkh), which means, "butcher," or "cook" and is derived from the verb *tavach* (jB^f^*) (taw-vakh), which means, "to slaughter."

Basically, the connotation of the verbal root is to deliberately "butcher" or "slaughter" an animal for food. However, this concept is also used metaphorically to indicate the killing of human beings.

When *tabbach* appears in the plural as it does in Genesis 37:36, it means, "bodyguards" or "executioners."

The word appears 32 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and appears twice in 1 Samuel 9:23f with the meaning "cook" and 30 times and always in the plural with the meaning "bodyguards" (cf. Genesis 39:1; 2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 39:9ff). This latter meaning is unique to the Hebrew Old Testament.

The history of this term tells us that the bodyguards had as one of their responsibilities the slaughtering and preparing of animals for food (Compare Genesis 40:2) and these men functioned also as executioners. Therefore, the expression "the captain of the bodyguard" reveals that Potiphar was the leader of not only the royal bodyguards offering protection to Pharaoh and his family but also they were the royal executioners for Pharaoh who executed capital sentences ordered by Pharaoh.

So we can see that through the providence of God Joseph was taken to capital city, which during the 12th Dynasty was Memphis and sold to a high ranking official in Pharaoh's cabinet, namely, Potiphar. The providence of God is the divine

outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Joseph ended up in Egypt with Potiphar did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob's family and to bring glory to Him. The Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

Genesis 39:1 records that Potiphar bought Joseph from the "Ishmaelites" whereas Genesis 37:36 records that he was sold to Potiphar by the "Midianites."

The names "Ishmaelites" and "Midianites" in Genesis 37:25, 27, 28, 36 and Genesis 39:1 are synonymous terms, which is confirmed by Judges 8:24, which says of the Midianites "they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites."

The use of these two terms in Genesis 37 indicates that the term "Ishmaelite" was as a generic term or general designation for "nomadic traders" or "desert tribes" whereas "Midianite" indicates a specific ethnic affiliation. Or in other words, the term "Midianites" in Genesis 37 refers to a specific ethnic affiliation among the league of desert tribes or nomadic traders known by the generic use of the term "Ishmaelites."

Genesis 39:2-6 presents the record of God blessing the captain of Pharaoh's bodyguard, Potiphar on account of Joseph.

Genesis 39:2

"The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian."

"Lord" is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God thus indicating that the Lord had a covenant relationship with Joseph since he was a member of the covenant family, Israel.

The term "Lord" also emphasizes the "immanency" of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Joseph by prospering while in servitude to Potiphar.

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" refers to the Lord's presence in the life of Joseph despite his adverse circumstances and refers to the fact that the Lord will not only protect Joseph but also prosper him while he is in exile in Egypt.

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" reveals that the Lord was the reason for Joseph's success while under Potiphar's authority.

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" teaches that although Joseph's circumstances had drastically changed, his relationship with the Lord had remained the same.

Although Joseph was going through adverse and difficult circumstances the Lord had never left him, nor had He forsaken him.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

"Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.'"

"so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?'"

Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid or tremble at them, for the LORD your God is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you."

Joshua 1:5, "No man will be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you."

Psalms 37:28, "For the LORD loves justice and does not forsake His godly ones; They are preserved forever, but the descendants of the wicked will be cut off."

Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

The statement “the Lord was with Joseph” also teaches that the Lord remained faithful to Joseph in his adverse circumstances.

1 Corinthians 1:9, “God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

2 Thessalonians 3:3, “But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.”

The statement “the Lord was with Joseph” help to put Joseph’s unfair treatment and adversity into proper perspective in that despite all the setbacks Joseph had faced and would face in the future, the Lord had a plan for his life and was on his side.

Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”

The statement “he (Joseph) became a successful man” means that whatever Joseph did for Potiphar the Lord saw to it that he was successful and prospered.

The statement “he (Joseph) was in the house of his master, the Egyptian” is the first of four stages in Joseph’s rise to power in the house of Potiphar.

The statement “he (Joseph) was in the house of his master, the Egyptian” means that Joseph was a “domestic” slave meaning he worked in the household of Potiphar and was “not” assigned strenuous field labor.

Nahum Sarna, writes, “It was not uncommon for slaves in Egypt to be employed in professional jobs such as household management and the administration of property. This situation is illustrated by an Egyptian papyrus deriving from 1833-142 B.C.E., which lists the names of nearly eighty slaves in an Egyptian household, together with their occupations. Strangely, the Asian slaves clearly enjoyed superior status and performed the skilled jobs while the Egyptian slaves were given the more onerous and strenuous labors in the fields. By working in the house, Joseph has the opportunity to display his administrative talents and to win the favor of his master” (Nahum Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, page 271, Jewish Publication Society).

Instead of becoming bitter about his circumstances, Joseph trusted in the Lord and was aware of the fact that the Lord controls history and therefore, his circumstances.

The two prophetic dreams that Joseph was given by God, which he had communicated to his father and brothers now served to give him encouragement while he was serving Potiphar. In our day and age, the Scriptures, which are revelation from God concerning our future (See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), serve as encouragement to us when we go through adversity and underserved suffering in our lives.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

The revelation from God that Joseph received in his two dreams constituted the “Word of God” for him whereas here in the church age, the Word of God appears in the original languages of Scripture.

Joseph’s confidence in the Lord’s promises inspired faith in him so that he committed his way to the Lord.

Psalms 37:5, “Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He will do it.”

Genesis 39:3

“Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.”

The statement “his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand” refers to Joseph’s competence in fulfilling his duties, which are not specified and was visible proof that the Lord was prospering Joseph.

The statement “his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand” refers to the fact that Potiphar knew that Joseph worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and his father Jacob.

The fact that Potiphar saw that the Lord was with Joseph and how the Lord caused all that he did to prosper in his hand indicates that Joseph did

everything Potiphar asked him to do as unto the Lord.

The apostle Paul taught this principle to the slaves residing in the churches throughout the Roman Empire in the first century (See Ephesians 6:5-8).

Colossians 3:22-24

“Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.”

“Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men.”

“knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

Therefore, since Joseph did his work as unto the Lord rather than for Potiphar, the Lord was with Joseph and honored his faith and faithfulness by causing him to be successful in all his tasks in the household of Potiphar.

Potiphar could not help noticing this and even perhaps Joseph spoke to Potiphar of the Lord. Even though Potiphar was an unbeliever, he recognized that Joseph’s God was making him successful in all he was doing.

Genesis 39:4

“So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge.”

The statement “Joseph found favor in his (Potiphar’s) sight” is the second stage in Joseph’s rise to power in the house of Potiphar and means that Joseph won the esteem and confidence of his master Potiphar.

The statement “(Joseph) became his (Potiphar’s) personal servant” is the third stage in Joseph’s rise to power and refers to the fact that Joseph went from serving Potiphar impersonally to serving him as his personal assistant or servant.

The statement “he (Potiphar) made him (Joseph) overseer over his house and all that he (Potiphar) owned he put in his (Joseph’s) charge” is the fourth and final stage in Joseph’s rise in the house

of Potiphar and means that Joseph became Potiphar’s business manager or comptroller responsible for Potiphar’s entire estate.

The statement “he (Potiphar) made him (Joseph) overseer over his house and all that he (Potiphar) owned he put in his (Joseph’s) charge” refers to the pinnacle of Joseph’s career as a servant in Potiphar’s household.

Potiphar’s estate must have been considerable since he worked directly for Pharaoh and it appears that Joseph had the gift of administration and Potiphar the gift of delegating authority.

Genesis 39:5

“It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian’s house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD’S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.”

The moment Potiphar promoted Joseph to be his business manager that was responsible for his entire estate, the Lord blessed his entire house on account of Joseph, which is called “blessing by association.”

“Bless” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates that on account of Joseph who was a descendant of Abraham and Isaac, God endued Potiphar and his entire household with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.

The expression “in the house and in the field” is a figure of speech called “merism” which is an expression of totality through the combinations of opposites.

The statement “LORD’S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field” means that God prospered every aspect of Potiphar’s property in the sense that the Lord multiplied it so that he became very wealthy.

The blessing upon Potiphar’s house on account of Joseph anticipates the blessing Joseph would bring to the entire world as prime minister of Egypt during the worldwide famine. The fact that Potiphar and the entire world would be blessed by

God on account of Joseph is one of the ways in which all the families of the earth were to find blessing in Abraham's descendents since Joseph was a descendant of Abraham (See Genesis 12:3).

Genesis 12:3, "And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

The Lord's power is directed through the Semitic Joseph to the Hamitic Egyptians just as the Lord promised Abraham in Genesis 12:3. The principle that those who bless the descendants of Abraham would be blessed by God is illustrated in that since Potiphar blessed Joseph who was a descendant of Abraham by promoting Joseph as overseer over his entire household, so God blessed Potiphar by increasing his estate.

The fact that Potiphar was blessed because of his association with Joseph would be a great encouragement to Joseph that the Lord was present with him.

Genesis 39:6

"So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate."

Genesis 39:6 records that Joseph won Potiphar's complete and unqualified confidence and trust in his ability and integrity.

The expression "except the food which he ate" is a figure of speech referring to Potiphar's private affairs.

In Genesis 39:6b-7, we have the record of Potiphar's wife tempting Joseph to commit adultery with her.

Genesis 39:6b

"Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance."

We now have a description of Joseph's appearance in order to explain the behavior of Potiphar's wife, which is described in Genesis 39:7-10.

"Handsome of form" is composed of the adjective *yapheh* (חַפְּיָה) (yaw-feh), which means, "attractive as to outward appearance" and the noun

to'ar (רָאָה) (to-ar), which refers to the shape of the body. Therefore, the expression "handsome of form" (*yapheh-tho'ar*) describes Joseph as being physically attractive in outward appearance in that he was well-built.

This adjective *yapheh* is used of only two other men, namely, David (See 1 Samuel 16:12) and his son Absalom (See 2 Samuel 14:25).

"Handsome...in appearance" is composed of the adjective *yapheh* (חַפְּיָה) (yaw-feh), which means, "attractive as to outward appearance" and the noun *mar'eh* (מַרְאֵה) (mar-eh), which is related to anything having to do with seeing, including not only the act of seeing but the eyes themselves.

Therefore, the expression "handsome in appearance" (*wipheh mar'eh*) describes Joseph as having a handsome face with emphasis upon the eyes since the noun *mar'eh* is related to anything having to do with seeing, including not only the act of seeing but the eyes themselves.

The noun *mar'eh* is used to describe Joseph's grandmother Rebekah (See Genesis 26:7) and his mother Rachel (See Genesis 29:17) and of David (See 1 Samuel 17:42) and Bathsheba (See 2 Samuel 11:2) and Absalom's daughter Tamar (See 2 Samuel 14:27) and Esther (See Esther 2:7).

This same expression *yapheh tho'ar wipheh mar'eh*, "handsome in form and appearance" appears in Genesis 29:17 to describe Joseph's mother Rachel as having a great figure and beautiful eyes.

Genesis 29:17, "And Leah's eyes were weak, but Rachel was beautiful of form and face."

Rachel and Joseph are the only people in the Old Testament that are described by this expression.

Humility and character are more important to God than outward appearance. Remember the principle the Lord taught the prophet Samuel when selecting a king over Israel.

1 Samuel 16:7, "Do not look at his appearance, or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as men sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

This last comment at the end of Genesis 39:6 about Joseph's appearance anticipates the next step in Joseph's career. It is common in Hebrew Old Testament narrative for the end of one episode to serve as a trailer for the next. As we will see, Joseph's good looks cause him problems in that Potiphar's wife lusts after him.

Genesis 39:7

"It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, 'Lie with me.'"

"After these events" refers to the four stages in Joseph's elevation to power in Potiphar's house, which are recorded in Genesis 39:2-6a.

The expression "his master's wife" refers to Potiphar's wife whose name is never revealed by the narrator in order to express the Holy Spirit's displeasure with her conduct in attempting to seduce Joseph.

The statement "his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph" refers to Potiphar's wife looking with sexual desire at the physically attractive Joseph or in other words she was lusting after him. This statement refers to the fact that she has already committed adultery in her heart, which is sin.

Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

The Word of God prohibits adultery.

Exodus 20:14, "You shall not commit adultery."

Committing adultery is a manifestation of not loving your neighbor as yourself.

Romans 13:8-10

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

"For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU

SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

Proverbs 6:32, "The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it."

Under the Mosaic Law, both the adulterer and the adulteress received the death penalty.

Leviticus 20:10, "If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."

Potiphar's wife has succumbed to two of the three great temptations of Satan's cosmic system, namely, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes.

1 John 2:15, 16

"Do not love the cosmic system in the sense of honoring it by taking pleasure in it to the extent that it becomes more important than your relationship with God, nor the cosmic system's temptations. If anyone does love the cosmic system in the sense of honoring it by taking pleasure in it to the extent that it becomes more important than one's relationship with God, then, the love for the Father is, as an eternal spiritual truth, unequivocally not resident and active in him."

"Because, each and every one of the cosmic system's temptations, the flesh's lust, the eye's lust, the arrogance produced by that which one possesses in life, is as an eternal spiritual truth unequivocally not originating from the Father but rather is as an eternal spiritual truth originating from the cosmic system."

"Lie" is the verb *shakhav* (bk^v*) (shaw-kahv), which is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex. The word is used of Lot's daughters with Lot (19:32-35), the

Philistines with Rebekah (26:10), Shechem with Dinah (34:2, 7), and Reuben with Bilhah (35:22).

In Genesis 39:7, the verb *shakhav* indicates that Potiphar's wife desired to have illicit sex with Joseph in the sense that she wanted to commit adultery with him.

The statement "lie with me" refers to sexual intercourse indicating that Potiphar's wife acted upon the lust for Joseph that was already in her heart.

James 1:13-15

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."

"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

"Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

Notice, that it was after Potiphar promoted Joseph to the highest position in his household that his wife started noticing Joseph and then propositioned him. Potiphar's wife would have had little interest in a common household slave. However, when Joseph's great administrative and leadership abilities were manifested to the extent where Potiphar gave Joseph total control over his estate, then it appears Potiphar's wife took notice and coupled with Joseph's good looks, Joseph became very attractive to Potiphar's wife. So the text indicates that it was over a period of some time that Potiphar's wife came to the conclusion she must have him.

Joseph probably had his "office" inside the house of Potiphar. He now had the authority to come and go wherever and whenever he pleased. He had constant and ready access to the house of Potiphar. Undoubtedly, Potiphar was not home very often (See Genesis 39:16) since he held an important position under Pharaoh, and with a capable administrator like Joseph, why should he concern himself with matters at home? It was inevitable that contact with Potiphar's wife would be more frequent and under more private conditions and so she increasingly attempted to capitalize on this.

Finally, she brazenly propositioned him (verse 7) and from then on she hounded him, probably engineering opportunities to entice him and persistently trying to break down his resistance.

The temptation of Joseph parallels the test of Adam and Eve in the garden in that just as they had free use of everything in the garden, except the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil so Joseph had access to anything of Potiphar's except his wife. But while the forbidden fruit just hung there tempting Adam and Eve, Potiphar's wife actively pursued Joseph.

It is interesting that this story about Joseph reverses a well-known plot in the patriarchal narratives. In the past we have seen the beautiful wives of Abraham and Isaac, Sarah and Rebekah sought by foreign rulers such as Pharaoh and the kings of the Philistines but now it was Joseph, the handsome patriarch himself who was sought by the wife of a foreign ruler.

In the past we have seen that it was either the Lord (12:17; 20:3) or the moral purity of the foreign ruler (26:10) that rescued the wife rather than the patriarch, but here it was Joseph's own moral courage and restraint that prevented an adulterous affair with Potiphar's wife.

In the preceding narratives, the focus of the writer had been on God's faithfulness in fulfilling his covenant promises, in the story of Joseph his attention is turned to the human response.

Next, we will see Joseph rejecting the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife, which is recorded in Genesis 39:8-10.

Genesis 39:8

"But he refused and said to his master's wife, 'Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge.'"

Joseph dealt with the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife by giving her three reasons why he is refusing her sexual advances: (1) It would be an abuse of the great trust placed in him by Potiphar. (2) It would be an offense against her husband. (3) It would be a great sin against God.

Notice, he does not preach to her in that he does not condemn her as immoral for making such a

proposition since there were greater considerations, which must take precedence. Nor does he get angry with her since he is conscious of his subordinate position to her and thus shows her respect.

The first reason that Joseph gives to Potiphar's wife for refusing her advances is that to commit adultery with her would be an abuse of trust since Potiphar had put him in charge of his entire household. Joseph reasons with her by pointing out that it would be a terrible betrayal of her husband's trust for him to take the one thing he had kept from him, his own wife.

Genesis 39:9

“There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?”

The second reason that Joseph gives Potiphar's wife for refusing her sexual advances is that to commit adultery with her would be a violation of her husband's marital rights.

The third reason reflects his covenant relationship with God in that he tells her that to commit adultery with her would be a sin against God.

Psalm 51:4, “Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.”

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden when He brought the Woman to Adam to be his helpmate (See Genesis 2:18-25). Therefore, committing adultery would be sin against God because it would violate the divine institution of marriage.

Proverbs 6:32, “The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it.”

Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

Recovering from the sin of adultery demands the confession of the sin to the Father and then bringing one's thoughts in obedience to Christ,

which constitutes obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 to be influenced by means of the Spirit and Colossians 3:16 to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.”

“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”

Ephesians 5:18: “And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit.”

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

Even though the Mosaic Law was not yet given, which prohibited adultery, Joseph and the rest of his family had knowledge that God ordained sex for marriage since the account of the creation of Adam and the Woman was passed down by word of mouth from Adam to his father Jacob. Joseph was taught in his family, which was the covenant family of God, that God ordained the permanence and sanctity of marriage and that it was sin to violate this divine institution. This third reason reveals the spiritual principle that sins against our fellow man such as adultery are in reality sins against God.

Joseph's love for the Lord motivated Joseph to obey God's will, which prohibited adultery. His love and gratitude to the Lord for all that He had done for him was the secret to withstanding the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife since his love

for the Lord and gratitude towards Him motivated Joseph to obey the laws of God pertaining to adultery.

Obedience to the will of God, motivated by love for God, enables the believer to withstand temptation from the old Adamic sin nature and the cosmic system of Satan. Obedience to the will of God demonstrates our love for God.

John 14:15, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."

Obedience to the Word of God is motivated by the believer's love for the Lord and the believer's love for the Lord is simply the response of the believer to the love God has demonstrated towards the believer through His Son Jesus Christ on the Cross and raising him up and seated him with Christ (See Ephesians 2:1-10). This is why the apostle Paul prayed that the Philippians love for the Lord would continue to grow since love for the Lord serves as a protection from sin and motivation to resist the temptation to sin.

Philippians 1:9, "Now, this I make it a habit to pray that your divine-love might continue to flourish yet more and more by means of a total discerning experiential knowledge (of the love of God manifested in Christ by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture)."

Therefore, Joseph had the capacity to withstand the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife because he loved the Lord and he loved the Lord because the Lord loved him first.

1 John 4:19, "We love, because He first loved us."

Joseph's love for the Lord was demonstrated by his obedience to the Lord's commands and Joseph's obedience to the Lord's commands was the response in his soul to the love, which the Lord exercised towards him.

Also, Joseph's awareness that God had a plan for his life and his personal sense of destiny further motivated him to withstand the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. The two prophetic dreams that God gave to Joseph recorded in Genesis 37:5-11 demonstrated to Joseph that God had a great plan for his life. He was convinced that God had called him to a special task in life and he had seen

evidence of that in his rapid rise from slavery. Therefore, to sin by committing adultery with Potiphar's wife would hinder him from fulfilling God's plan for his life.

God has ordained sex within the boundaries of marriage in order to perpetuate and protect the human race from disease and emotional trauma, which is brought on by adultery.

Joseph does not use the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, "Lord" but rather uses *Elohim*, "God" since he is dealing with an unbelieving Gentile.

Now, in order to gain a greater appreciation for the moral courage and strength that Joseph displayed in withstanding the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife, we must understand that Joseph was a young man who was not married and therefore had no outlet for his sexual desires. Also, in Joseph's day, sexual promiscuity was commonplace in slave societies such as Egypt.

Genesis 39:10

"As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her."

Potiphar's wife ignores Joseph's reasoning and attempts to wear down his resistance by relentlessly propositioning him, which was a tactic that was successful against Samson (See Judges 14:17; 16:16-17). Not only did Joseph resist her demands to have sex with him but he would not even stay in her presence as indicated by the phrase "be with her." Therefore, we see that Joseph took double precaution in that he would not even allow himself to be in her presence in order to prevent anything from taking place that could lead to adultery.

In Genesis 39:11-18, we see that once again Joseph rejects the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife and in frustration she makes false accusations against him.

Genesis 39:11

"Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside."

The situation between Joseph and Potiphar's wife reaches a climax when she attempts to actually physically grab him.

The phrase "he went into the house to do his work" is a necessary detail to excuse Joseph for being alone in the house with Potiphar's wife.

Even though Joseph did all that he could to avoid Potiphar's wife, he could not keep out of the house entirely since he had work to do in the house that was essential in fulfilling his job function.

The statement "none of the men of the household was there inside" indicates that there were no other men on the premises that could act as witnesses that Potiphar's wife attacked Joseph and not the other way around.

Genesis 39:12

"She caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me!' and he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside."

The statement "she (Potiphar's wife) caught him (Joseph) by his garment" indicates that Potiphar's wife was frustrated that her verbal assaults had failed with Joseph and so in desperation she resorts to physical aggression.

"She caught him" is composed of the 3rd person feminine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *taphas* (צפ^T*) (taw-fas), which means, "to seize, to take hold of by force" and the 3rd person masculine singular pronominal suffix that means, "him," which refers to Joseph.

The verb *taphas* describes an act of violence, which is very unusual since normally a man rapes a woman by force with little dialogue and a woman seduces with her speech but Potiphar's wife actually attempts to rape Joseph.

Nowhere in Scripture is there a woman like Potiphar's wife who aggressively attempts to rape a man.

"Garment" is the noun *beghedh* (dg#B#) (behg-ed), which refers to a loose fitting garment like a cloak or a coat, which was removed upon entering one's home.

The statement "lie with me" refers to sexual intercourse. "Lie" is the verb *shakhav* (bk^v*) (shaw-kahv), which appears also in Genesis 39:7

and is used as a euphemism for sex and is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex.

In Genesis 39:7 and 12, the verb *shakhav* indicates that Potiphar's wife desired to have illicit sex with Joseph in the sense that she wanted to commit adultery with him.

Joseph flees from the house to avoid the grasp of Potiphar's wife. "Fled" is the verb *nus* (sWn) (noos), which means, "to flee swiftly and immediately from the presence of someone" and describes a spontaneous action and abrupt withdrawal from the presence of Potiphar's wife by Joseph.

The phrase "went outside" means that once Joseph was outside of the house he assumed his normal way of walking and stopped running in order to not attract attention to himself.

Notice that in dealing with the aggressive sexual advances of Potiphar's wife that Joseph does not stop to pray about the matter but takes immediate and drastic action to avoid her. The Bible teaches that we are to flee immorality.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body."

"Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"

"For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

Genesis 39:13-14

"When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed.'"

The picture we have given to us here in this passage is that the passionate desire of Potiphar's wife suddenly turned into the rage of a woman scorned. So Potiphar's wife seizes Joseph, grabbing his outer garment. Joseph pulls away

from her, fleeing from her, thus leaving his outer garment or cloak in her hands, which was incriminating evidence unless she took immediate action and the initiative by accusing Joseph of attempting to rape her. So Potiphar's wife takes the initiative by calling to the men of her household in order to fabricate witnesses.

H.C. Leupold commenting on this passage, writes, "This was definitely a case of spurned love but different from all previous instances, for Joseph had left his coat behind and had fled out-of-doors. Now either servants might come and see the coat and raise incriminating questions or they might also have witnessed the hasty exit of Joseph. In either case Potiphar's wife would stand under strong suspicion. To divert suspicion to Joseph she hastily goes on the offensive by raising an outcry, summoning the men of the household and making the protestation of an outraged innocence. When her passion put her in danger, its unholy flame burns against Joseph without any consideration of what might befall him" (Exposition of Genesis, Volume 2, page 999, Baker Book House).

Notice that Potiphar's wife does "not" use her husband's name when addressing the other servants but instead uses the pronoun "him" and by doing so reveals that there was a problem in their marriage and that she has contempt for him.

Also, notice that she identifies herself with her servants and their situation as indicated by her twice using the 1st person common plural pronominal suffix, which means, "us" and she does this so as to elicit sympathy on their part.

The expression "make sport of us" indicates that Potiphar's wife is accusing Joseph of "insulting" or "making fun of" her and the entire household since the piel form of the verb *tsachaq* (Qt^X*) (tsaw-khak) is used in the original Hebrew text and means, "to mock, to insult, make fun of."

Potiphar's wife identifies Joseph as the "Hebrew" which in the original Hebrew text says literally, "Hebrew man." "Hebrew" is the proper noun *'ivri* (yr!b+u!) (iv-ree), which first appears in Genesis 14:13 to describe Abraham as a legitimate and well-known descendant of Shem through Eber and was therefore, in the Messianic line, or the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15. Therefore, the term "Hebrew" denotes Joseph's nationality in

contrast with other nationalities in the land of Canaan (cf. Gen. 43:32; Ex. 1:15; 2:11; 21:2) and the Egyptians.

Potiphar's wife uses the term "Hebrew" in order to appeal to "xenophobia," which is an "unreasonable fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers." She is attempting to incite in her Egyptian servants the racial bigotry that the Egyptians had towards the Israelites. This racial bigotry that the Egyptians had towards the Israelites is illustrated in Genesis 43:32, which records that the Egyptians did not eat with the Hebrews since that was repulsive to them.

Just as she was disloyal to her husband by attempting to commit adultery with Joseph, so she is disloyal to Joseph before her servants.

Genesis 39:15

"When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside."

Potiphar's wife makes three statements accusing Joseph of attempted rape, all of which are lies: (1) Genesis 39:14: "he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed" (2) Genesis 39:15: "When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside."

Her first statement that Joseph attempted to have sex with her is a lie since she attempted to rape Joseph.

Her second statement that she supposedly screamed when Joseph allegedly attempted to rape her is a lie since she never once screamed. Her claim that she screamed was a necessary fabrication in order to establish that the sex was against her will and evidence of her resistance to attempted rape (See Deuteronomy 22:22-27). She could claim that she screamed since there was no one in the house at the time of her encounter with Joseph.

Her third statement that Joseph left his garment beside her when she screamed is a lie since she was left with Joseph's garment as a result of Joseph fleeing her when she grabbed his garment.

The only truth in all of her statements is that Joseph fled outside, which was necessary just in

case anyone might have seen Joseph leaving her room and walking normally.

Lies and bearing false witness as well as slander are an abomination to the Lord.

Proverbs 6:16-19, “There are six things which the LORD hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that run rapidly to evil, a false witness who utters lies, and one who spreads strife among brothers.”

Her accusation against Joseph that he attempted to rape her is “slander,” which by way of definition refers to defamation, which is publishing or speaking maliciously or falsely anything that would injure or harm a person’s reputation and so slander is a malicious, false, and defamatory statement or report.

Potiphar’s wife slandered Joseph in that she gave her servants a malicious, false and defamatory report about Joseph. She defamed Joseph’s character in that she spoke maliciously about their previous encounter so as to harm him and his reputation. Needless to say, Joseph was defenseless on the basis of his position as a slave in the face of these accusations against him.

There is no record of any response on the part of those to whom she told this accusation, those who all were under the authority of Joseph. Personally, I doubt that any of them believed her account since everyday they could see her giving him the eye, and that Joseph never had acted inappropriately toward her. In fact, the only talk of the servants may have been about how Joseph avoided her and how some of them were compelled to accompany him into the house.

The response of the other slaves did not really matter, though, for they were no more inclined to report to Potiphar about his wife’s misconduct than was Joseph and neither were they willing to take Joseph’s side and deny the account of this woman when her husband returned.

Genesis 39:16

“So she left his garment beside her until his master came home.”

Genesis 39:16 says that Potiphar’s wife left Joseph’s coat beside her until “his master” came home and not “her husband” since it was in the capacity of a slave master that she is confronting her husband so as to put pressure on him to act.

Genesis 39:17-18

“Then she spoke to him with these words, ‘The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.’”

In order to manipulate Potiphar to take action against Joseph, she places the blame on her husband since he gave a foreign slave such as Joseph authority and freedom in their home emboldening Joseph to try to disrobe in front of her as if she was the injured party and a faithful wife!

Notice that when speaking of Joseph to her servants Potiphar’s wife describes him as a “Hebrew man” whereas when speaking to Potiphar she calls Joseph “the Hebrew slave” in order to emphasize Joseph’s slave status.

Also, when speaking to her servants, she identifies with them by saying that Joseph was making sport of “us” whereas when speaking to her husband she uses the singular “me” in order to arouse her husband’s jealous instincts and sense of outrage. Furthermore, it is quite interesting that when accusing Joseph before her husband, Potiphar’s wife does “not” use the exact same language as when she spoke to her servants.

In Genesis 39:14, Potiphar’s wife speaks to her servants and makes the accusation that “he (Joseph) came in to me to lie with me” but in Genesis 39:17 she says to her husband that Joseph “came in to me to make sport of me.”

In Genesis 39:14, when speaking to her servants, she uses the expression *ba’`elay lishkav`immi* (aB* yl^a@ bK^v+! yM!u!), “he came in to me to lie with me.”

In Genesis 39:17, when speaking to Potiphar, she uses the expression *ba’`elay* (yl^a@a@aB*), “he came in to me.”

In Genesis 39:14, when speaking to her servants, she uses the verb *shakhav* (bK^v*) (shaw-kahv),

“lie,” which is never used for loving marital intercourse in Genesis but only for illicit or forced sex and in the context of Genesis 39:14 refers to rape. However, in Genesis 39:17 when speaking to her husband she omits the word! Therefore, we can see that when speaking to her servants, Potiphar’s wife accuses Joseph of rape as indicated by her use of the verb *shakhav* but when speaking to her husband, she does “not” accuse Joseph of rape as indicated by her omitting the verb *shakhav*.

Although the verb *bo*, “he came in” is used in Scripture at times as a euphemism for sexual intercourse, it is never used in Scripture with reference to illicit sex.

Also indicating that when speaking to her husband, Potiphar’s wife did “not” accuse Joseph of rape is that Genesis 39:19 does “not” say that Potiphar’s anger burned directly against Joseph, which we would expect but rather it says that he simply got angry.

Further indicating that Potiphar’s wife did “not” accuse Joseph of rape when speaking to her husband is that when Potiphar goes to punish Joseph, he gives him a light sentence by throwing him into prison rather than executing him, which would have been expected, especially from someone who was Pharaoh’s chief executioner. It appears that when speaking to her husband, she is insinuating that Joseph simply disrobed as a preliminary to rape and this is indicated in Genesis 39:17 by her statement, “he left his garment beside me.” Therefore, it appears that she secretly hoped that by having Joseph imprisoned, she might be able to finally break Joseph so that he would sleep with her. The fact that she did not accuse Joseph of attempted rape when speaking to Potiphar but rather accuses him of disrobing in front of her reveals that she did not want Joseph killed because she hoped to break down his resistance so that he would have sex with her.

Genesis 39:19-20 records Joseph being reluctantly imprisoned by Potiphar as a result of his wife’s accusations.

Genesis 39:19, “Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, ‘This is what your slave did to me,’ his anger burned.”

Genesis 39:20

“So Joseph’s master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king’s prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail.”

Psalm 105:18 reveals that Joseph’s feet were put in shackles and his neck in irons.

Psalm 105:18, “They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons.”

Since Potiphar could not disprove his wife’s accusations, he had no other recourse but to imprison Joseph. He could not have taken his Hebrew’s slave word over his Egyptian wife’s since she would have been outraged if he did and spread it all over town thus ruining his reputation and career.

The fact that he imprisons Joseph for the charge of disrobing in front of his wife and does not execute him immediately indicates that Potiphar knew both his wife and Joseph too well to really believe that he received the truth from his wife.

Also, further indicating that Potiphar did not believe his wife’s story is that Joseph never runs since if he were guilty of any crime, he would have run to escape punishment but the fact that he never runs indicates that he has no guilt and therefore, did not commit any crime.

If what Potiphar heard from his wife were true then he would be justified in his anger against Joseph but the Scripture does “not” say that Potiphar’s anger burned against Joseph but rather it simply says that “his anger burned.”

The fact that Potiphar does “not” really believe his wife’s accusations against Joseph as indicated in that he does not execute Joseph but rather imprisons him indicates quite clearly that he was angry because he lost the services of the most efficient business manager in all the land of Egypt.

Also, Potiphar would be angry with his wife for placing responsibility for the trouble on him for bringing in an alleged sexual predator in their home for her to deal with. This is indicated in that when Potiphar’s wife speaks to him about Joseph, she calls Joseph “your slave” indicating that she is placing the blame for this alleged incident with Joseph on him since he gave Joseph his authority and freedom.

Genesis 39:20 is called a “janus” section, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after. Therefore, Genesis 39:20 functions as a “janus” between the last scene, which ended with Potiphar confining Joseph to the royal prison (See Genesis 39:20a) and the new scene, which opens with the Lord providing for Joseph in prison as he underwent suffering for blessing (See Genesis 39:20b-21). Genesis 39:20 functions as a “janus” between the two scenes by repeating the word “prison.”

“Jail” is composed of the noun *bayith* (ty!B^ (bah-yith), which means, “house” and the articular noun *sohar* (rh^s)) (so-har), which means, “prison,” thus a “prison house” and was a fortified prison and was usually attached to the dwelling of such an officer as Potiphar. It was partly a underground dungeon according to Genesis 41:14, though the brick-built walls rose considerably above the surface of the ground, and were surmounted by a vaulted roof, somewhat in the form of an inverted bowl.

Two passages in Genesis 40 make it clear that the prison referred to is located nowhere other than in Potiphar’s house, probably in a dungeon in the basement.

Genesis 40:3, “So he (Pharaoh) put them (Pharaoh’s chief baker and cupbearer) in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, in the jail, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned.”

Genesis 40:7, “He (Joseph) asked Pharaoh’s officials who were with him in confinement in his master’s house, ‘Why are your faces so sad today?’”

If we compare these passages of Scripture we know that Joseph was imprisoned in a house which belonged to the “captain of the bodyguard” (Genesis 40:3), and we know this captain to be Potiphar (Genesis 39:1). Furthermore, Joseph is said to have been in confinement “in his master’s house” (Genesis 40:7), which we know was Potiphar’s house. Therefore, the jail that Joseph was put in was located on the premises of Potiphar’s estate, which also explains why the

chief jailer so quickly placed matters under Joseph’s charge and so Joseph would have been well known to the chief jailer.

Finally, it is consistent with the doubts that Potiphar may have had concerning the truthfulness of his wife’s accusations. Even if he did believe his wife, Potiphar could continue to benefit from Joseph’s uncanny abilities if he confined him in the prison that was found in his own house. So we can see that Joseph has been demoted in the sense that he was banned from the penthouse and bound in the prison. He went from the top floor to the basement.

I’m sure Potiphar went down to Joseph each day to discuss business with him and all of the areas which used to be under Joseph’s direct control and so Joseph was now only a consultant to Potiphar.

We close this chapter by noting verses twenty-one thru twenty-three, which reveals to us that the Lord caused the chief jailor to place Joseph in charge of the prison he is confined in.

Genesis 39:21

“But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.”

“Lord” is the proper noun *Yahweh*, which is the covenant name of God thus indicating that the Lord had a covenant relationship with Joseph since he was a member of the covenant family, Israel.

The term “Lord” also emphasizes the “immanency” of God meaning that the Lord was involving Himself in and concerning Himself with and intervening in the life of Joseph by prospering while he was imprisoned.

The statement “the Lord was with Joseph” refers to the Lord’s presence in the life of Joseph despite his adverse circumstances and refers to the fact that the Lord not only protected Joseph but also prospered him while he was imprisoned in that the Lord caused the overseer to delegate authority to Joseph over the entire prison population.

The statement “the Lord was with Joseph” refers to the fact that even though Joseph was unjustly accused and imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, the Lord was present with Joseph and was

manifested in that the Lord gave Joseph favor in the sight of the chief jailer.

Hebrews 13:5, 6

Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, 'I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU.'"

"so that we confidently say, 'THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?'"

Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" also teaches that the Lord remained faithful to Joseph in his adverse circumstances.

Lamentations 3:22-24, "The LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, Therefore I have hope in Him."

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" helps to put Joseph's unfair treatment and adversity into proper perspective in that despite being imprisoned for a crime he didn't commit, the Lord had a plan for his life and was on his side.

Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, "plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

God permitted Joseph to experience unjust treatment in order to develop his character and advance him to spiritual maturity so that he would have the capacity to promote him to a position of authority as prime minister of Egypt resulting in the fulfillment of Joseph's two prophetic dreams (See Genesis 37:5-11).

If you recall, in Genesis 37:5-11, Joseph received direct revelation from God in two dreams, which predicted that his brothers and his father would one day come under his authority and this was

fulfilled when Joseph became prime minister of Egypt and his brothers unknowingly bowing down to him.

We must remember that the two prophetic dreams that Joseph received from God when he was seventeen years of age would serve as an encouragement to him while he was imprisoned for a crime he did not commit. These dreams, which contain revelation from God about the future of Joseph's family and himself served as a great encouragement to Joseph while he was incarcerated for thirteen years in Egypt.

In our day and age, the Scriptures, which are revelation from God concerning our future (See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), serve as encouragement to us when we go through adversity and underserved suffering in our lives.

Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

The revelation from God that Joseph received in his two dreams constituted the "Word of God" for him whereas here in the church age, the Word of God appears in the original languages of Scripture.

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" is a reference to the providence of God, which is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that Joseph's life was not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

The statement "the Lord was with Joseph" reveals that the Lord was the reason for Joseph's success while imprisoned and teaches that although Joseph circumstances had drastically changed, his relationship with the Lord had remained the same.

The fact that "the Lord was with Joseph" is a repetition of what happened with Joseph and his relationship to Potiphar who gave him authority over his entire household (See Genesis 39:1-6).

"Kindness" is the noun *chesedh* (כֶּסֶד) (kheh-sed), which means, "loyal for faithful love" to Joseph and which loyal or faithful love God expresses in faithfulness to His covenant promises

to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and their descendants such as Joseph.

Micah 7:20, "You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago."

The word *chesedh* involves the inferior partner depending on the kindness of the superior to meet a desperate need and so we see that the Lord who is superior to Joseph meets a desperate need of his covenant partner Joseph while in prison.

Psalms 31:7, 8, "I will rejoice and be glad in Your lovingkindness, because You have seen my affliction; You have known the troubles of my soul, and You have not given me over into the hand of the enemy; You have set my feet in a large place."

Psalms 32:10, 11, "Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but he who trusts in the LORD, lovingkindness shall surround him. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous ones; And shout for joy, all you who are upright in heart."

Psalms 36:7, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings."

Psalms 59:17, "O my strength, I will sing praises to You; For God is my stronghold, the God who shows me lovingkindness."

Notice that God does "not" immediately remove Joseph from the undeserved suffering but rather the Lord remains with Joseph in the midst of it as indicated by the statement "the Lord was with Joseph."

There are 3 agencies that God employs to bring about suffering: (1) Old sin nature (2) Cosmic system (3) Satan.

Now there are "positive" and "negative" categories of suffering. Negative categories of suffering: (1) Self-induced misery: Suffering from making bad decisions (2) Divine discipline: Suffering designed to get to confess our sins and get back us in fellowship with God. Joseph is experiencing the "positive" category of suffering, which is "suffering for blessing."

Notice that the Lord blesses Joseph while he is suffering undeservedly. In order to grow to

spiritual maturity, the believer must experience undeserved suffering since it is through undeserved suffering that the believer is conformed to the image of Christ.

Underserved suffering is designed to draw us closer to the Lord by leading us to appropriate by faith our union and identification with Christ in His death, resurrection and session so as to rest in our position in Christ.

The power of God in our lives is never more noticeable or conspicuous as when we are suffering, going through adversities and even going through the process of dying because when self has been crucified then the life of Jesus can be manifested in the believer.

There are 3 categories of undeserved suffering in spiritual adulthood, all of which are in actuality, "suffering for blessing" in the sense that undeserved suffering conforms the believer into the image of Christ, and enables him to reach spiritual maturity.

The 1st category of undeserved suffering is related to the 1st stage of spiritual adulthood, which is "spiritual self-esteem." "Spiritual self-esteem" is characterized by the believer's confidence in his relationship with the Lord derived from a certain degree of knowledge of the Word of God but is vulnerable to arrogance and thinking oneself superior to others based upon this knowledge.

"Providential preventive suffering" is experienced by the believer at the 1st stage of spiritual adulthood, spiritual self-esteem and is designed to keep the believer from getting arrogant as well as to advance the believer to the 2nd stage of spiritual adulthood, which is spiritual independence (2 Cor. 12:7). This is illustrated in 2 Corinthians 12:1-7.

2 Corinthians 12:1-9

"Boasting is necessary, though it is not profitable; but I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord."

"I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago -- whether in the body I do not know, or out of the body I do not know, God knows -- such a man was caught up to the third heaven."

“And I know how such a man -- whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows -- was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which a man is not permitted to speak.”

“On behalf of such a man I will boast; but on my own behalf I will not boast, except in regard to my weaknesses.”

“For if I do wish to boast I will not be foolish, for I will be speaking the truth; but I refrain from this, so that no one will credit me with more than he sees in me or hears from me.”

“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me -- to keep me from exalting myself!”

“Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.”

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

The 2nd category of undeserved suffering is related to the 2nd stage of spiritual adulthood, which is “spiritual autonomy,” or “spiritual independence,” which is characterized by the believer’s ability to solve his own problems with the Word of God but his love for the Lord and others must be strengthened.

“Momentum testing” is experienced by the believer at the 2nd stage of spiritual adulthood, which is spiritual independence and is designed to advance him to the 3rd and final stage of spiritual adulthood, spiritual maturity and comes in 4 categories: (1) People Testing (2) Thought Testing (3) System Testing (4) Disaster Testing (2 Cor. 12:10).

2 Corinthians 12:10, “Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults (people testing), with distresses (thought testing), with persecutions (system testing), with difficulties (disaster testing), for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

“Spiritual maturity” is characterized by the believer’s maximum function of love for the Lord and others and as a result has an invisible impact in 5 areas: (1) Personal: Your own periphery. (2) National: The Pivot. (3) International: Blessing by association through a mature missionary. (4) Angelic: Witness for the Prosecution in the Rebuttal Phase of Satan’s Appeal Trial. (5) Heritage: Children of a mature believer are blessed after the believer dies.

“Evidence testing” is experienced “exclusively” by the believer in spiritual maturity and is the privilege of the believer to become a witness for the Prosecution (God) in the rebuttal phase of Satan’s appeal trial (Job 1-2).

The appeal trial of Satan is human history and is the result of God granting Satan his appeal after God judged him and the fallen angels and sentenced them to the lake of fire forever for their rebellion in eternity past.

Evidence Testing is a cross-examination by Satan and comes in 2 categories: (1) Relation to the plan of God. (2) Relation to the circumstances of life.

Job is an example of a mature believer who received evidence testing in relation to the circumstances of life. His testing was in 3 parts: (1) Loss of prosperity (Job 1). (2) Loss of health (Job 2:1-10). (3) Loss of friends (Job 11-13; 16:1-5).

Underserved suffering enables the believer to experience identification with Christ in His death and resurrection.

Philippians 3:10, “that I come to know Him experientially and the power from His resurrection and the participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death.”

“That I come to know Him experientially” refers to experiencing fellowship with Christ after salvation by experiencing identification with Him in His death and resurrection.

“The power from His resurrection” refers to experiencing the divine omnipotence available to the believer because of his identification with Christ in His resurrection.

“The participation in His sufferings by my becoming like Him with respect to His death”: refers to the believer denying self and taking up his cross and experiencing identification with Christ in His death.

Philippians 3:11, “If somehow (by becoming like Him with respect to His death), I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones.”

“I may attain to the exit-resurrection, namely, the one out from the (spiritually) dead ones” refers to experiencing identification with Christ in His resurrection, which is accomplished by applying the Word of life, which enables the Spirit of life to reproduce the character and life of Christ in the believer.

The phrase “namely, the one out from the dead ones” refers to 2 categories of spiritual death: (1) Real spiritual death: unregenerate people (2) Temporal spiritual death: regenerate people who our consistently out of fellowship with God.

It is a privilege to suffer undeservedly for Christ’s sake.

Philippians 1:29, “It has been graciously granted (the privilege) because of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also, to suffer (hardship) because of Him.”

God never permits us to undergo any testing that we don’t have the capacity for.

1 Corinthians 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

Just as the Father’s plan for the Lord Jesus Christ involved undeserved suffering so the plan of God for our lives involves undeserved suffering. If our Master, the Lord suffered undeservedly, so we, His servants will as well.

John 15:20, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute

you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also.”

Those who desire to live spiritually will be persecuted.

2 Timothy 3:12, “Indeed, all who desire to live spiritually in fellowship with Christ Jesus will be persecuted.”

The apostle Peter also writes to believers concerning undeserved suffering for blessing.

1 Peter 2:18-25

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.”

“For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.”

“For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”

“For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.”

“WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.”

“and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously.”

“and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.”

“For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls.”

1 Peter 4:1-19

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.”

“but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.”

“If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.”

“Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.”

“but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name.”

“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?”

“AND IF IT IS WITH DIFFICULTY THAT THE RIGHTEOUS IS SAVED, WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE GODLESS MAN AND THE SINNER?”

“Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”

Genesis 39:21

“But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer.”

The expression “chief jailer” in the original Hebrew literally means, “the ruler of the prison house” since it is composed of the noun *sar* (rV^), “overseer” and the noun *bayith* (ty!B^) (bah-yith), “house” and the articular noun *sohar* (rh^s)) (so-har), “prison.” Therefore, we see that the Lord gave Joseph favor in the sight of the prison warden, who is denoted by the phrase “the ruler of the prison house” and who was under the authority of Potiphar according to Genesis 40:3.

The statement “gave him (Joseph) favor in the sight of the chief jailer” means that Joseph won the esteem and confidence of the prison warden.

The statement that the Lord “gave him (Joseph) favor in the sight of the chief jailer” means that the prison warden was friendly towards Joseph and that Joseph was held in high regard by him as manifested when he delegated authority to Joseph

to be the overseer over the entire prison population.

Genesis 39:22-23 records that the prison warden made Joseph the overseer over the entire prison population because the Lord was with him.

Genesis 39:22

“The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it.”

Genesis 39:23

“The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper.”

If you recall, the jail that Joseph was put in was located on the premises of Potiphar’s estate, which also explains why the chief jailer so quickly placed matters under Joseph’s charge and so Joseph would have been well known to the chief jailer. Potiphar would go down to Joseph each day to discuss business with him and all of the areas which used to be under Joseph’s direct control and so Joseph was now only a consultant to Potiphar with authority over the entire prison population.

The prison warden who was under Potiphar’s authority would have known of Joseph’s administrative skills and was either ordered by Potiphar or decided himself to delegate authority to Joseph over the entire prison population. Therefore, we can see that the Lord caused Joseph to find favor with the prison warden just as He had done with Potiphar.

Just as the Lord prospered Joseph and manifested His presence in the life of Joseph through Potiphar who delegated authority to Joseph over his entire estate so He prospered Joseph and manifested His presence in the life of Joseph through the prison warden who delegated authority to him over the entire prison population.

Joseph’s experiences under Potiphar and the prison warden would prepare him and give him greater capacity for even greater responsibility in the future when Pharaoh would establish him as prime minister over all of Egypt.

Typology in Genesis 39

I thought it would be instructive if we complete our study of Genesis 39 by noting that Joseph and the events in his life typify the Lord Jesus Christ and the events in His life.

“Typology” is from the Greek word for form or pattern, which is *typos* (τυπος) and in biblical times denoted both the original model or prototype and the copy that resulted.

Biblical typology involves an analogical correspondence in which earlier events, persons, and places in salvation history become patterns by which later events and the like are interpreted. A type is a specific parallel between two historical entities. An example of a type is found in Romans 5.

Romans 5:14, “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

The Lord Jesus Christ employed typology in His teaching about Himself. For example, in John 6, the Lord compared His humanity to the manna that was given to Israel, which typified His human nature that would provide for spiritual nourishment.

A type is designed to teach us a lesson about the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, we see in our study that the historical personage of Joseph “parallels” the historical personage of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Also, many of the historical events in the life of Joseph that are recorded in Genesis 39 “parallel” many of the historical events in the life of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The fact that the events in the life of Joseph that are recorded in Genesis 37 and 39 typified the many of the events in the life of Christ and that Joseph himself is a type of Christ does “not” mean that Joseph is equal to the Lord but rather that Joseph and the events in his life foreshadow the Lord and the events in His life.

No other character in the Bible foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ more than Joseph. In Joseph we see the Lord Jesus as the Preserver, Provider and

Savior. Of the seven great figures in the book of Genesis that whose biographies we have studied, Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, Joseph’s story is the longest.

Genesis 39:1, “Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there.”

The fact that Joseph was brought to Egypt foreshadows our Lord brought to Egypt by Joseph.

Matthew 2:13-15

“Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, ‘Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him.’”

“So Joseph got up and took the Child and His mother while it was still night, and left for Egypt.”

“He remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ‘OUT OF EGYPT I CALLED MY SON.’”

The fact that Joseph became a servant of Potiphar’s typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who came to serve both men and God.

Philippians 2:5-7

“Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset.”

“On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men.”

Isaiah 49:7, “Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One, to the despised One, to the One abhorred by the nation, to the Servant of rulers, ‘Kings will see and arise, princes will also bow down, because

of the LORD who is faithful, the Holy One of Israel who has chosen You.”

Genesis 39:2, “The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian.”

The fact that the Lord was with Joseph typifies our Lord who spoke of His heavenly Father as always with Him.

John 16:32, “Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.”

Genesis 39:3, “Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand.”

The statement in Genesis 39:2 that Joseph became successful and the statement in Genesis 39:3 that the Lord prospered Joseph typifies the Lord Jesus Christ who was prospered by the Father when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand.

Isaiah 52:13, “Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up and greatly exalted.”

Isaiah 53:10, “But the LORD was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief; If He would render Himself as a guilt offering, He will see His offspring, He will prolong His days, and the good pleasure of the LORD will prosper in His hand.”

Genesis 39:4, “So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge.”

Genesis 39:4 records that Joseph found favor in the sight of Potiphar, which typifies the Lord Jesus Christ finding favor with God the Father.

John 8:29, “And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.”

Genesis 39:5, “It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus

the LORD'S blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.”

Genesis 39:5 records that Potiphar and his entire household were blessed by association with Joseph, which parallels or typifies the church receiving every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places on account of their union and identification with Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3, “Worthy of praise and glorification is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the One who has blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in the Person of Christ.”

Genesis 39:6a, “So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate.”

When Potiphar put His entire estate under Joseph's authority, this foreshadowed God the Father putting all creation and every creature under the authority of His Son Jesus Christ.

John 3:35, “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand.”

Genesis 39:6-12

“Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance.”

“It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’”

“But he refused and said to his master's wife, ‘Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge.’”

“There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?”

“As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her.”

“Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside.”

"She caught him by his garment, saying, 'Lie with me!' and he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside."

When Joseph resisted the temptation to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife day after day and did not sin, this typified our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who was tempted and never sinned.

Hebrews 4:15, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin."

1 John 3:5, "You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin."

Genesis 39:13-18

"When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, she called to the men of her household and said to them, 'See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed.'"

"When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside."

"So she left his garment beside her until his master came home."

"Then she spoke to him with these words, 'The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.'"

Genesis 39:13-14 records that Joseph was accused of a crime that he did not commit by Potiphar's wife and never defended himself, which foreshadowed the Lord Jesus Christ who never defended Himself when He was falsely accused.

Matthew 26:59, 60

"Now the chief priests and the whole Council kept trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death."

"They did not find any, even though many false witnesses came forward."

Matthew 27:12, "And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He did not answer."

Isaiah 53:7, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth."

Genesis 39:19, 20

"Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, 'This is what your slave did to me,' his anger burned."

"So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail."

Genesis 39:19-20 and Psalm 105:18-19 record that Potiphar put Joseph in chains, which foreshadows our Lord being bound before being led away to be delivered to Pilate.

Matthew 27:1-2, "Now when morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus to put Him to death; and they bound Him, and led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate the governor."

Psalm 105:18, "They afflicted his feet with fetters, he himself was laid in irons."

The fact that the fetter hurt Joseph's feet typifies our Lord's feet being pierced through at His crucifixion.

Psalm 22:16, "They pierced my hands and my feet."

As we noted Potiphar did not believe his wife's accusations against Joseph. The fact that Potiphar does "not" really believe his wife's accusations against Joseph as indicated in that he does not execute Joseph but rather imprisons him indicates quite clearly that he was angry because he lost the services of the most efficient business manager in all the land of Egypt. Therefore, the fact that Potiphar does "not" believe his wife's accusations and that Joseph was innocent foreshadows Pilate believing that our Lord was innocent of the accusations made against Him by the chief priests who demanded His crucifixion.

Luke 23:4, "Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, 'I find no guilt in this man.'"

Genesis 39:21-23

"But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer."

"The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it."

"The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made to prosper."

Genesis 39:21-23 records Joseph winning the respect of the prison warden, which typifies our Lord winning the respect of the Roman centurion who presided over His crucifixion.

Luke 23:47, "Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent.'"

Matthew 27:54, "Now the centurion, and those who were with him keeping guard over Jesus, when they saw the earthquake and the things that were happening, became very frightened and said, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"

Finally, the fact that Joseph suffered unjust treatment at the hands of the Gentiles foreshadows our Lord being mistreated by the Gentiles.

Acts 4:25-28

"WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS? THE KINGS OF THE EARTH TOOK THEIR STAND, AND THE RULERS WERE GATHERED TOGETHER AGAINST THE LORD AND AGAINST HIS CHRIST."

"For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."

Genesis 40

Genesis 40 contains the story of Joseph interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker who were imprisoned with Joseph because they offended Pharaoh. Let's begin a study of this chapter by studying Genesis 40:1-4, which records Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker being incarcerated in the same prison as Joseph.

Genesis 40:1

"Then it came about after these things, the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt."

Genesis 40:2

"Pharaoh was furious with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and the chief baker."

"After these things" indicates that the events recorded in Genesis 40 took place after the events of Genesis 39, which records Potiphar imprisoning Joseph as a result of his wife accusing Joseph of disrobing in front of her.

The title "the king of Egypt" is synonymous with the designation "Pharaoh" which in the Hebrew means, "great house" and was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. and meant something like "his honor, his majesty."

The "Pharaoh" or "king of Egypt" during the time of Joseph's imprisonment would have been Sesostri II (1897-1878 B.C.) and whose dreams Joseph interpreted and whom he served as prime minister.

"The Cupbearer" was an important official who held a position of trust in the Egyptian court since he was responsible for protecting the king from being poisoned by the beverages he was served. Therefore, his loyalty to the king had to be beyond reproach because of the sensitivity of his position and as a result these officials were often wealthy and influential as Egyptian documents testify (See Nehemiah 1:11). Nehemiah occupied a similar position in the Persian court according to Nehemiah 1:11-2:8. Also, in many cases they became confidants and favorites of the kings they served and wielded political influence.

"The baker" was also an important official who held a position of trust in the Egyptian court since

he was responsible for preparing the food that the king would eat.

Therefore, both the “cupbearer” and the “baker” of Pharaoh attended to his food and drink and had close access to him and both could play a role in a conspiracy against him.

“Offended” is the verb *chata* (ʔf*j*) (khaw-taw), which is in the qal stem and means, “to be guilty of a moral wrongdoing,” which causes offense to another.

Therefore, this verb indicates that Pharaoh was justified in his anger towards the cupbearer and the baker since they were guilty of a moral wrongdoing, which offended Pharaoh, the king of Egypt but what they did is not identified to the reader by the Scriptures. In contrast to Joseph who was imprisoned unjustly for a crime he did not commit, the imprisonment of the “cupbearer” and the “baker” had been justified because they were guilty of moral wrongdoing that offended their master, Pharaoh. Unlike, Joseph who did not commit a crime against his master, Potiphar, the cupbearer and the baker did commit an offense against their master, Pharaoh.

“Officials” is the noun *saris* (syr!s*), which refers to either court officials or to literal eunuchs and is regarded as a loanword from Akkadian referring to a high-ranking court official, which in early biblical literature appears to be the meaning.

However, in later times, the Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians adopted the practice of castrating those who served in the royal palace and the harems. Consequently, the term came to mean “eunuch” meaning a castrated male, thus one who is sexually impotent. Kings did not wish to risk a son of a servant being an heir to the throne. The cupbearer and the baker were probably eunuchs and castrated since they were part of Pharaoh’s court unlike Potiphar as indicated in that he had a wife.

Genesis 40:3

“So he put them in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, in the jail, the same place where Joseph was imprisoned.”

“Confinement” is the noun *mishmar* (rm*v+m!) (mish-mawr), which means, “custody.”

Therefore, Pharaoh placed his cupbearer and baker in the “custody” of the captain of the bodyguard, who was Potiphar.

“Bodyguard” is the noun *tabbach* (jB*f^*) (tab-bawkh), which means, “butcher,” or “cook” and is derived from the verb *tavach* (jB^f*) (taw-vakh), which means, “to slaughter.”

Basically, the connotation of the verbal root is to deliberately “butcher” or “slaughter” an animal for food. However, this concept is also used metaphorically to indicate the killing of human beings.

When *tabbach* appears in the plural as it does in Genesis 37:36, it means, “bodyguards” or “executioners.” The word appears 32 times in the Hebrew Old Testament and appears twice in 1 Samuel 9:23f with the meaning “cook” and 30 times and always in the plural with the meaning “bodyguards” (cf. Genesis 39:1; 2 Kings 25:8; Jeremiah 39:9ff).

The history of this term tells us that the bodyguards had as one of their responsibilities the slaughtering and preparing of animals for food (Compare Genesis 40:2) and these men functioned also as executioners. Therefore, the expression “the captain of the bodyguard” reveals that Potiphar was the leader of not only the royal bodyguards offering protection to Pharaoh and his family but also he was one of the royal executioners for Pharaoh who executed capital sentences ordered by Pharaoh.

“Jail” is composed of the noun *bayith* (ty!B^*) (bah-yith), which means, “house” and the articular noun *sohar* (rh^s)) (so-har), which means, “prison,” thus a “prison house” and was a fortified prison and was usually attached to the dwelling of such an officer as Potiphar.

It was partly a underground dungeon according to Genesis 41:14, though the brick-built walls rose considerably above the surface of the ground, and were surmounted by a vaulted roof, somewhat in the form of an inverted bowl.

Genesis 40:3 records that Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker were imprisoned in the house of the captain of the bodyguard who we know was Potiphar and Genesis 40:7 records that this prison was located in Potiphar’s house as indicated by the phrase “in

his (Joseph's) master's house," and which dungeon was in the basement.

If we compare these passages of Scripture we know that Joseph was imprisoned in a house which belonged to the "captain of the bodyguard" (Genesis 40:3), and we know this captain to be Potiphar (Genesis 39:1). Furthermore, Joseph is said to have been in confinement "in his master's house" (Genesis 40:7), which we know was Potiphar's house. Therefore, the prison house under the warden was situated on the estate of the captain of the bodyguard who was Potiphar, Joseph's master.

Genesis 40:4

"The captain of the bodyguard put Joseph in charge of them, and he took care of them; and they were in confinement for some time."

The captain of the bodyguard, who was none other than Potiphar, put Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker under Joseph's authority.

Remember, the prison warden was under the authority of Potiphar and we saw that the prison warden gave authority to Joseph over all the prisoners according to Genesis 39:21-23. Therefore, Joseph was functioning in the place of the prison warden.

The prison warden who was under Potiphar's authority would have known of Joseph's administrative skills and was either ordered by Potiphar or decided himself to delegate authority to Joseph over the entire prison population.

The fact that Potiphar would do such a thing is further evidence that Potiphar believed Joseph to be innocent of the charges leveled at him by his wife since he wouldn't have done so if he thought Joseph guilty.

"Put...in charge of" is the verb *paqadh* (dq^P*) (paw-kad), which is used in an administrative context and involves the appointing of Joseph over Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker as well as entrusting these high ranking officials in Pharaoh's court to Joseph. This same verb appears in Genesis 39:4 and was used to describe Potiphar appointing Joseph the overseer of his entire estate.

Potiphar knew that either the cupbearer and the baker or both could be released and restored to the

favor of Pharaoh. Therefore, he knew it would be wise to treat these men very well since if he didn't and they were restored to their former positions, they would bear a grudge against him and speak badly of him to Pharaoh and so he entrusts these men to Joseph who he knew would take good care of these men.

The expression "he (Joseph) took care of them (Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker)" in the Hebrew literally means that Joseph "waited on" or "served" these men as indicated by the verb *sharath* (tr^v*) (shaw-rath), which appears in Genesis 39:4 describing Joseph "serving" as Potiphar's personal servant. This expression emphasizes again Joseph's role as a servant and was another test for Joseph since he would not have authority over them but rather be their servants.

Joseph performed his duties as unto the Lord, which is a principle that the apostle Paul taught to the slaves residing in the churches throughout the Roman Empire in the first century (See Ephesians 6:5-8).

Colossians 3:22-24

"Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord."

"Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men."

"knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

The fact that Pharaoh's cupbearer was incarcerated in the same prison as Joseph was another manifestation of the providence of God in Joseph's life. The providence of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Pharaoh's cupbearer was incarcerated in the same prison as Joseph did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Joseph's family and to bring glory to Himself.

The fact that a high ranking official in Pharaoh's court would be incarcerated in the same prison as Joseph was a manifestation of the providence of God in Joseph's life since the cupbearer would introduce Joseph to Pharaoh according to Genesis 41:9-14. The cupbearer introduced Joseph to Pharaoh since the latter was troubled by dreams, which Joseph interpreted and which led to Pharaoh promoting Joseph to prime minister of Egypt.

Genesis 40:5-15 records Joseph interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and then making a personal request of him.

Genesis 40:5

“Then the cupbearer and the baker for the king of Egypt, who were confined in jail, both had a dream the same night, each man with his own dream and each dream with its own interpretation.”

These two dreams of the cupbearer and the baker have different meanings unlike Joseph's two dreams, which had the same meaning emphasizing their future fulfillment (See Genesis 37:5-11; 41:25, 32).

Like Joseph's dreams, the dream of the cupbearer and the baker were prophetic in nature dealing with the future of each man and were revelation from God since Joseph was able to interpret them only with God's help. Both dreams occurred during the same night but each dream pertained to the future of each man and would require a different interpretation revealing that each man's future contrasted with the other in that one would die and the other live.

Just as Joseph's two dreams, which appear in Genesis 37:5-11, were a revelation of God's sovereign will for Joseph and his entire family so the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker were a revelation of the sovereign will of God for both men. The repetition that they were imprisoned emphasizes their vulnerability since they were prisoners who were uncertain about their future and so any revelation about their future in the dreams would obviously be of great interest to them.

Nahum Sarna commenting on the anxiety of these men, writes, “The anxiety normally brought on by the accepted seriousness of dreams is here

intensified for the prisoners by the uncertainty as to their fate and by their being denied access to a professional dream interpreter. The coincidence of the two officials having simultaneous dreams doubtless also heightened their tension” (The JPS Torah Commentary, page 277, The Jewish Publication Society).

These dreams would give Joseph an opportunity to come to Pharaoh's attention who later on would have a dream that related to the future of his nation, which needed interpretation, which Joseph provided with the help of God.

Genesis 40:6

“When Joseph came to them in the morning and observed them, behold, they were dejected.”

Genesis 40:7

“He asked Pharaoh's officials who were with him in confinement in his master's house, ‘Why are your faces so sad today?’”

“Pharaoh's officials” refers to Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker as indicated in Genesis 40:1-5.

The turmoil that was taking place in the soul of each man reflected in their faces and their attitudes.

Proverbs 15:13, “A joyful heart makes a cheerful face, but when the heart is sad, the spirit is broken.”

The fact that Joseph took the time to observe the dejected attitude of both men he was serving and that he asked them why they were dejected reveals Joseph's compassionate attitude towards people. To have compassion for someone is to have an intense desire to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause and to act upon this desire (1 John 3:16-17). That Joseph was concerned for these two men is amazing and divine in character.

Remember, Joseph was unjustly incarcerated for a crime that he did not commit however, the imprisonment of these two men was justified as indicated in Genesis 40:1, which records that they were guilty of moral wrongdoing, which is not revealed to us. Also, Joseph was serving these two men as indicated in Genesis 40:4 by the statement

“he (Joseph) took care of them (Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker).” Yet, we do not see Joseph resenting these men but instead shows them compassion, which reveals that he is serving these two men as unto the Lord. Joseph performed his duties as unto the Lord, which is a principle that the apostle Paul taught to the slaves residing in the churches throughout the Roman Empire in the first century (See Ephesians 6:5-8).

Ephesians 6:5-8

“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ, not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

“With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.”

Joseph is operating in the love of God, which is compassionate since his motivation for treating these men in this manner is the direct result of believing that God had a plan for his life even though he was incarcerated unjustly. The fact that Joseph is treating these men with compassion is amazing and divine since they were guilty and deserving of their imprisonment and he was not, he was innocent serving them who were guilty.

God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17).

Joseph had the capacity to treat these men with compassion because he had faith that God had a plan for his life, which was revealed in the two prophetic dreams that he received from God as recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. It is easy to treat people with compassion when they are deserving but difficult to do so for those who are undeserving and so Joseph’s actions typified our God’s treatment of us while we were His enemies (See Romans 5:6-8).

We are commanded to be compassionate to each other since it reflects God’s treatment of us who

are undeserving of anything from Him (See Colossians 3:12-13).

Genesis 40:8

“Then they said to him, ‘We have had a dream and there is no one to interpret it.’ Then Joseph said to them, ‘Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell it to me, please.’”

The cupbearer and baker respond to Joseph’s questions and state that there is no one in the prison to interpret their dreams referring to professional dream interpreters that the Egyptians commonly used. Realizing that God had given him the ability to interpret their divine revelations Joseph invited the two prisoners to relate their dreams to him but notice he was careful to give God the glory for his interpretative gift (v. 8; cf. 41:16, 25, 28, 39). Thus refuting the professional Egyptian dream interpreters who were frauds set up by the kingdom of darkness. The interpretation of dreams is not a human art but a gift from God.

Joseph’s statement “Do not interpretations belong to God?” is a refutation of the professional Egyptian dream interpreters expressing the fact that the interpretation of dreams is not a result of learning and manipulation but rather divine revelation.

Notice that Joseph does “not” use the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, “Lord” when addressing these men but rather uses *Elohim*, “God” since he is “not” speaking to members of God’s covenant people but rather unbelievers.

Like Joseph, Daniel also had this ability and likewise gave God the credit (cf. Dan. 2:28). We know from Egyptian sources that the Egyptians believed that dreams were indicative of future events, and so these two were most concerned by the fact that here, in the dungeon, there was no one qualified to interpret their dreams for them. Their futures had been revealed to them in their dreams, but they could not be interpreted, and the realization of this brought great distress to them and this was reflected in their faces.

Genesis 40:9-11 reveals the content of the cupbearer’s dream whereas Genesis 40:12-13 records Joseph’s interpretation of the dream. Genesis 40:14-15 records Joseph making a

personal request for intercession by the cupbearer to Pharaoh in his behalf.

Genesis 40:9-10

“So the chief cupbearer told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, ‘In my dream, behold, there was a vine in front of me; and on the vine were three branches. And as it was budding, its blossoms came out, and its clusters produced ripe grapes.’”

Genesis 40:11

“Now Pharaoh's cup was in my hand; so I took the grapes and squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup, and I put the cup into Pharaoh's hand.”

Genesis 40:12-13

“Then Joseph said to him, ‘This is the interpretation of it: the three branches are three days; within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head and restore you to your office; and you will put Pharaoh's cup into his hand according to your former custom when you were his cupbearer.’”

The dream of the cupbearer reflects his profession. The events in the dream happen rapidly where the grape growing season, the production process and the serving of the wine each takes place instantaneously and follow one another in rapid succession emphasizing the imminence of the dream's fulfillment.

The number three dominates the cupbearer's dream. The three branches represent or signify three days. The three stages of growth are sprouting, blossoming and ripening. The three actions taken by the cupbearer are the taking of the grapes, squeezing them and handing the wine to Pharaoh and Pharaoh's cup is mentioned three times. The recurrence of the number three confirms the fulfillment of the dream in three days. A comparison of Genesis 40:9-13 and Genesis 40:20 reveals that Pharaoh's birthday took place three days after Joseph interpreted the dream of the cupbearer.

The expression “Lift up your head” is a Hebrew idiom that is subject to two interpretations forming a pun with Genesis 40:19 and means, “to summon someone into the presence of a king” since the expression is used of both the cupbearer and

baker, the former was restored by Pharaoh and the latter was executed. This interpretation is confirmed in that in Akkadian, the equivalent to “lift up your head” meant, “to summon someone into the presence of a king.”

Genesis 40:14

“Only keep me in mind when it goes well with you, and please do me a kindness by mentioning me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house.”

Genesis 40:15

“For I was in fact kidnapped from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing that they should have put me into the dungeon.”

Bob Deffinbaugh, “A man in Joseph's position could easily have taken advantage of his circumstances. Frequently men in charge of prisoners would give preferential care to those who were willing and able to pay for it (See Acts 24:17, 26). These two officers were eager to learn the meaning of their dreams, a service that Joseph could have rendered for payment. He did, however, request that he be remembered before Pharaoh (verse 14), for the circumstances which led to his arrival in Egypt, as well as those which brought him to prison, were a matter of injustice which Pharaoh could correct” (The Book of Genesis, page 296, Biblical Studies, 1997).

The fact that Joseph makes a plea on his own behalf emphasizes his confidence that his interpretation is from God and enhances the credibility of his interpretation in the eyes of the cupbearer. Joseph feels free to make this request of the cupbearer since in the ancient world dream interpreters charged for their services as in the case of Balaam (See Numbers 22:17f.).

Joseph's request that the cupbearer remember him when he is restored does “not” demonstrate a lack of faith in the Lord but rather a tremendous demonstration of faith that God had given him the correct interpretation to the cupbearer's dream.

Bob Deffinbaugh, “Joseph's one request of the butler gave further testimony to the great faith of this Hebrew prisoner. He was so certain that his interpretation was on the button that he made a

request of the butler which he never considered in the case of the baker and asked to be remembered before Pharaoh when his words came to pass. It is one thing to have an opinion on the meaning of a man's dream, but quite another to make a request for your freedom based upon the outcome of your interpretation. While content to remain in the dungeon so long as God willed, Joseph also made every effort to be removed from that place through the channels legitimately available to him" (The Book of Genesis, page 296, Biblical Studies, 1997).

Joseph tells the cupbearer that he was stolen from the land of the Hebrews, which is an accurate description of what happened to him. The Hebrew text says that he was "stolen" (Hebrew: *ganav* [bn^G*] [gaw-nav]) from the land of the Hebrews, which is an accurate description of what his brothers had done to him since they had stolen his freedom by selling him into slavery, which is a crime under the Mosaic Law that required the death penalty (See Exodus 21:16).

The expression "land of the Hebrews" emphasizes Joseph's nationality in contrast with the other well known nationalities of Canaan.

"Hebrew" is the proper noun *'ivri* (yr!b+u!) (iv-ree), which first appears in Genesis 14:13 to describe Abraham as a legitimate and well-known descendant of Shem through Eber and was therefore, in the line of the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15.

In Genesis 40:14, Joseph pleads with the cupbearer to get him "out of this house" whereas in Genesis 40:15, he says he has done nothing to be put into this "dungeon."

Genesis 40:3 records that Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker were imprisoned in the house of the captain of the bodyguard who we know was Potiphar. Genesis 40:7 records that this prison was located in Potiphar's house as indicated by the phrase "in his (Joseph's) master's house," and which dungeon was in the basement. If we compare these passages of Scripture we know that Joseph was imprisoned in a house which belonged to the "captain of the bodyguard" (Genesis 40:3), and we know this captain to be Potiphar (Genesis 39:1). Therefore, the fact that Joseph pleads with the cupbearer to get him "out of this house" and then

says he has done nothing to be into this "dungeon" indicates that Joseph was imprisoned in the basement of Potiphar's house, who was the captain of the bodyguard.

Next, we will study Joseph's interpretation of the baker's dream, which is recorded in Genesis 40:16-19. Genesis 40:16-17 records the content of the baker's dream and Genesis 40:18-19 records Joseph's interpretation of the dream.

Genesis 40:16-17

"When the chief baker saw that he had interpreted favorably, he said to Joseph

"I also saw in my dream, and behold, there were three baskets of white bread on my head; and in the top basket there were some of all sorts of baked food for Pharaoh, and the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

Genesis 40:18-19

"Then Joseph answered and said, 'This is its interpretation: the three baskets are three days; within three more days Pharaoh will lift up your head from you and will hang you on a tree, and the birds will eat your flesh off you.'"

Like the cupbearer, the dream of the baker reflects his profession. Now once Joseph had given the cupbearer a favorable interpretation of his dream, the baker felt encouraged and compelled to relate his dream to Joseph as well since his dream was similar to that of the cupbearer's dream where the number three was predominate. However, Joseph's interpretation of the baker's dream was not favorable.

Like the cupbearer's dream, the number three dominates the baker's dream. The three baskets represent or signify three days. The recurrence of the number three confirms the fulfillment of the dream in three days. A comparison of Genesis 40:9-13 and Genesis 40:20 reveals that Pharaoh's birthday took place three days after Joseph interpreted the dream of the cupbearer.

The image of "all sorts of baked food" on the head of the baker in his dream is reflected in Egyptian hieroglyphics, which lists thirty-eight kinds of cake and fifty-seven varieties of bread.

The prepositional phrase “on my head” appears once in Genesis 40:16 and 17. It is interesting that in Egyptian art portrays bakers carrying a basket on their head, which is a fitting image since the baker will be executed by decapitation (See Genesis 40:17, 19).

Notice that unlike the cupbearer who serves Pharaoh in his dream, the baker does not serve Pharaoh in his dream. In fact, the food that the baker is carrying in the dream does not even reach the mouth of Pharaoh since it is eaten by birds, which symbolizes the devouring of the baker’s body by the vultures.

The statement “the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head” symbolizes the baker’s unconscionable failure to protect Pharaoh’s table from poison since he never drives the birds away from the baked goods that was in a basket on his head.

The expression “Lift up your head from you” refers to the form of capital punishment the baker will be subject to, namely, decapitation.

The statement “will hang you on a tree” would be better translated “will impale you on a pole.” The reason for this rendering is that the Hebrew text contains the verb *talah* (חל*ט*) (taw-law), which is translated “hang” however, it means, “to impale” and also the noun *ets* (עץ) (ates), which is translated “tree” but refers to a pole cut from a tree. Further supporting this rendering is that the baker was decapitated thus making it impossible for him to be hanged.

The prediction that “the birds will eat your flesh off you” reveals that the baker’s corpse would be publicly exposed after execution and pecked by carrion birds. This severe punishment rather than a decent burial indicates that in the eyes of Pharaoh, the baker committed a crime that demanded public censure. The Egyptian belief system motivated them to pay special attention to the body after death, thus this type of severe punishment was considered awful by the Egyptians since they believed that this type of punishment prevented the victim’s spirit from resting in the afterlife.

Notice also that Joseph tells it like it is, which is an essential quality for a leader. Because of our sin natures, we are naturally inclined to gather about

us men who will tell us what we want to hear rather than to confront us with what we need to hear. The apostle Paul predicts to Timothy that this attitude of surrounding oneself with people who will only tell you what you want to hear is sign of the end times.

2 Timothy 4:1-4

“I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction.”

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

The news Joseph had to share with Pharaoh was not entirely good news, but it was the truth. On the basis of this message from God, provision could be made for the times of adversity which lay ahead. Pharaoh wanted a man under him who would tell him the truth, not give him reports designed only to make him feel good about his administration. This unpleasant task of telling the baker what his future held was not only for his good, but for Joseph’s, who would continue to “speak the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Joseph didn’t pull any punches with the baker and informed him that he would die, which reflects his integrity in that he told the truth since he could have told him anything and the baker would have never known the difference. Joseph wasn’t trying to win friends but was concerned about representing God.

Joseph’s interpretation of the baker’s dream, which speaks of impending judgment seems severe to us but we must remember that it was given to him by God in order to bring this man to a saving knowledge of Joseph’s God, the Lord Jesus Christ. This is why Jonah dreaded preaching a message of condemnation to the people of Nineveh (cf. Jonah 3:5-4:3). He knew that God was gracious and not willing that any man should

perish but that they come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

1 Timothy 2:4, "God desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

In the same way, the prediction of the death of the baker was intended to bring him to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ who is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. As Christians we must not only be prepared to tell the unsaved the good news of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone but also to tell them that they will be judged for rejecting Christ as Savior.

John 3:16-18

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

"For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him."

"He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Hebrews 9:27, "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment."

Those who reject Jesus Christ as Savior will be thrown into the eternal Lake of Fire forever and ever. Every unbeliever in history will have to stand before Christ at the Great White Throne Judgment, which will take place at the end of human history and is the judgment of all unregenerate humanity in human history for the rejection of Christ as Savior (Rev. 20:11-15).

Revelation 20:11-15

"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them."

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds."

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds."

"Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire."

"And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."

We complete our study of Genesis 40 by noting Genesis 40:20-23, which records for us the fulfillment of Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker in that the former is restored by Pharaoh but the latter is executed and Joseph is forgotten in prison.

Genesis 40:20

"Thus it came about on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday that he made a feast for all his servants; and he lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker among his servants."

Pharaoh's birthday took place three days after Joseph's interpretation of the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker and to commemorate the event Pharaoh has a party for all his servants. Ancient Egyptian texts mention great banquets being given and amnesty being granted to prisoners on the birthday of Pharaoh, which is the case in Genesis 40:20. Then while holding a feast for all his servants, Pharaoh summons from prison, his cupbearer and baker, which is indicated by the statement "he (Pharaoh) lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker."

The expression "lift up your head" refers to summoning a person into the presence of a king and so the statement "he (Pharaoh) lifted up the head of the chief cupbearer and the head of the chief baker" means that Pharaoh summoned both men into his presence.

Our text says that Pharaoh summoned his chief cupbearer and baker from prison while the banquet was taking place and in the presence of all his servants and this indicated by the phrase “among his servants.”

Genesis 40:21-22

“He restored the chief cupbearer to his office, and he put the cup into Pharaoh's hand; but he hanged the chief baker, just as Joseph had interpreted to them.”

The statement “He (Pharaoh) restored the chief cupbearer to his office and he put the cup into Pharaoh’s hand but he hanged the chief baker” echoes Joseph’s prediction to both men.

The statement “just as Joseph had interpreted to them” demonstrates that Joseph’s interpretations of the dreams of the cupbearer and baker were inspired by God and was another demonstration that “the Lord was with Joseph” (See Genesis 39:21).

“Hanged” is the verb *talah* (hl*T*) (taw-law), which means, “to impale” since the baker was decapitated as indicated by Joseph’s prediction in Genesis 40:19, “Pharaoh will lift up your head from you” thus making it impossible for him to be hanged.

Genesis 40:23

“Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him.”

The chief cupbearer fails to fulfill Joseph’s request to intercede on his behalf to Pharaoh.

“Did not remember” is composed of the negative particle *lo’* (aO) and the verb *zakhar* (rk^Z*) (zaw-kar), which does “not” refer to the act of remembering or reflecting but rather it refers to an act of recognition, the formal acknowledgement of someone entitled to consideration and the right to be heard or given attention. Therefore, after Pharaoh’s cupbearer was restored he did not recognize Joseph before Pharaoh in the sense that he did not formally acknowledge Joseph to Pharaoh even though Joseph was entitled to consideration and the right to be heard and given attention since Joseph had compassion for him at the time of great need.

“Forgot” is the verb *shakhach* (jk^V*) (shaw-kakh), which denotes “a willful choice to ignore something that a person knows he is to do” and so the cupbearer willfully chose to ignore fulfilling Joseph’s request. Therefore, we can see from the original Hebrew text that this was not a mental lapse on the part of Pharaoh’s cupbearer but rather a “moral” lapse, which manifested his self-centeredness as a result of being a slave to the sin nature.

The cupbearer’s deliberate refusal to present Joseph’s case to Pharaoh expresses the cupbearer’s ingratitude to Joseph. Joseph remained in prison for another two years since Genesis 41:1 says that Pharaoh had a dream two years after the cupbearer was restored by Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:1, “Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile.”

Even though the moral lapse by Pharaoh’s cupbearer was evil, God meant it for good since it was a part of the providence of God since God did not want Joseph to leave prison and Egypt.

Genesis 50:20, “As for you (Joseph’s brothers), you meant evil against me (Joseph), but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.”

Suppose that after he was restored, the cupbearer told Pharaoh about Joseph and then released Joseph so that he could return to his father in Canaan. This would have been bad since Pharaoh needed Joseph around when he had his dreams regarding the seven years of plenty and seven years of worldwide famine.

If Joseph didn’t remain in Egypt, then he would have never been there to interpret Pharaoh’s dream and if he doesn’t interpret Pharaoh’s dream, Joseph doesn’t get promoted by Pharaoh to prime minister of Egypt. If Joseph never gets promoted to the prime minister of Egypt by Pharaoh, then there will be no one capable in Pharaoh’s administration to follow God directions to store up enough grain during the seven years of prosperity so as to be prepared for the seven years of worldwide famine. If Joseph is not in place to administrate the Egyptian government under Pharaoh during the seven years of plenty and

seven years of famine, then Joseph's family dies of starvation in Canaan since Israel sends his sons to Egypt to get food to deal with the famine in Canaan (See Genesis 42). If Joseph's family dies of starvation, then the nation of Israel dies in its infancy and if so, then the Savior cannot come into the world and then there would be no salvation for man and no fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) and thus making God unfaithful.

The next two years would further train Joseph for the great position that he would be promoted to by Pharaoh as a result of interpreting Pharaoh's dreams. From the human perspective, such circumstances are unfair and lead to discouragement. However, from the divine perspective, one can see that God causes all circumstances to work together for God for those who love Him.

Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

If Joseph looked at the cupbearer willfully forgetting his request from the human perspective, he would be greatly discouraged. However, if he looked at this situation from the divine perspective, he would walk by faith and not sight meaning he would trust God who has his best interests in mind and refuse to let his imprisonment get him discouraged.

From the human perspective, this injustice against Joseph would be a cause for great discouragement. However, from the divine perspective, Joseph's imprisonment for another two years would continue to further to develop Christ-like character in him and prepare for the great work that would be his in just two short years.

The fact that the Scriptures do "not" record Joseph getting depressed and discouraged implies that he chose to walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7, "for we walk by faith, not by sight."

During the fourteen years that Joseph was in slavery and during the years of his imprisonment, he possessed and maintained a dynamic mental

attitude with love, joy, peace and no bitterness and resentment because he trusted that God would fulfill His Word to him in the form of the two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Joseph's two prophetic dreams, which were revelation from God about the future of Joseph and his family served as a great encouragement to Joseph while he was enslaved for fourteen years in Egypt and while he was incarcerated. In our day and age, the Scriptures, which are revelation from God concerning our future (See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), serve as encouragement to us when we go through adversity and underserved suffering in our lives.

Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

The revelation from God that Joseph received in his two dreams constituted the "Word of God" for him whereas here in the church age, the Word of God appears in the original languages of Scripture.

Since Joseph trusted the Word of God, he was able to transcend his tremendous adversity and injustice directed towards him. Therefore, he would agree with what Paul said in Philippians 4:12-13.

Philippians 4:12, 13

"I have experienced not only poverty but also I have experienced prosperity. By means of every circumstance and by means of all kinds of situations I am intimately acquainted with not only satiation, but also starvation, not only prosperity, but also destitution."

"I possess the power to overcome all kinds of situations by means of the one whose word empowers me."

Like Paul, the Word of God, which is alive and powerful, gave Joseph the power or capacity to be able to persevere and endure and not fall victim to self-pity and bitterness and disillusionment. Perseverance is being steadfast and faithful in applying the Word of God despite the many obstacles and cares of life in the cosmic system of Satan.

1 Timothy 6:11, "But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness."

Luke 8:15, "But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance."

Romans 8:25, "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

Endurance is the power of bearing anything such as hardship or trial.

1 Peter 2:20, "For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God."

2 Timothy 2:12, "If we endure, we will also reign with Him."

2 Timothy 2:10, "For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory."

Like Paul, Joseph was not intimidated by adverse circumstances. Like Paul, the application of the Word of God enabled the Holy Spirit to provide Joseph with divine viewpoint and the divine perspective which would protect his heart and thoughts from being intimidated by adversity. Like Paul, Joseph equated adversity with prosperity, he equated poverty and prosperity, satiation and starvation, prosperity and destitution because he sees the Lord's hand in each extreme circumstance since He controls human history as Sovereign Ruler of the cosmos and thus circumstances.

Trusting the Word of God produces a dynamic mental attitude toward life in that it gives us the capacity to transcend our adverse circumstances so as not to be a slave to them and preventing them from dictating our happiness.

Genesis 41

Genesis 41 records Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams and making a recommendation to him in light of these dreams, which results in Pharaoh

promoting him to prime minister, second only to Pharaoh in Egypt.

Genesis 41 is divided into four sections: (1) Genesis 41:1-8: Pharaoh's dreams and dilemma (2) Genesis 41:9-24: Joseph's deliverance and Pharaoh sharing his dream with Joseph (3) Genesis 41:25-40: Joseph's interpretation, plan and promotion (4) Genesis 41:41-57: Joseph's rule according to the plan.

Genesis 41:1-7 records Pharaoh of Egypt having two dreams. This is the third pair of prophetic dreams that we have encountered in our study of the life of Joseph, which points to the providence of God indicating that the events in the life of Joseph were not by chance or fate but were ordained by God.

In Genesis 37:5-11, Joseph had two dreams, which predicted his rulership over his entire family. In Genesis 40, Joseph interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker and predicted that the former would be released and the latter executed. In Genesis 41, we will see Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's two dreams and predicting seven years of great prosperity in Egypt and then seven years of famine.

Like Joseph's dreams and the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker, Pharaoh's dreams were prophetic in nature dealing with the future of the nation of Egypt and were revelation from God since Joseph was able to interpret them only with God's help.

In Joseph's own dreams God revealed to him the plan for his life whereas the second set of dreams of the cupbearer and baker established Joseph's reputation and the third set of dreams brought the fulfillment of God's plan for Joseph.

Pharaoh's dreams mark the turning point in the life of Joseph. Up to this point Joseph has been treated unjustly in that he was sold into slavery by his brothers and then Potiphar's wife accused him of a crime he did not commit leading to his unjust imprisonment. This was followed by Pharaoh's cupbearer not fulfilling Joseph's request to bring his case to the attention of Pharaoh, which resulted in Joseph spending two more years in prison. However, in Genesis 41, we see the Lord intervening in the life of Joseph for his benefit by

giving Pharaoh these two prophetic dreams that only Joseph could interpret with His help.

Pharaoh's two prophetic dreams and the seven years of prosperity and famine demonstrate God's sovereign control over the nations and the lives of individuals like Joseph and God's sovereign care and protection over the nation of Israel, which would be preserved because of Joseph.

Genesis 41:1-7 recounts Pharaoh's dreams in the third person and thus from the detached perspective of the narrator in order to give insight to the reader as to the psychological impact these dreams made on Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:1

“Now it happened at the end of two full years that Pharaoh had a dream, and behold, he was standing by the Nile.”

The phrase “at the end of two full years” refers to the elapse of two complete years since Pharaoh restored his cupbearer who failed to fulfill Joseph's request to make Pharaoh aware of his situation.

During these two years, Joseph remained imprisoned in the house of the captain of the bodyguard who we know was Potiphar and continued to be prepared for a leadership position in Egypt that God would give him in fulfillment of His plan for Joseph's life.

“Behold” is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which appears six times in Genesis 41:1-7 (41:1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7), linking the two dreams and drawing the reader in, letting him view Pharaoh's dreams from his perspective.

Dreams were significant in the cultures of the ancient Middle East and were often considered to be divine revelation and in the days of the patriarchs, dreams were a common means of divine communication and were of a prophetic nature. Pharaoh's dreams were a revelation from God and were prophetic in nature, revealing to Pharaoh the economic life of Egypt for the next fourteen years.

The fact that the Nile River is the setting for Pharaoh's dream is significant since this river was literally the lifeline of Egypt, the source of its economy and power and thus the source of

Pharaoh's power and is thus a symbol of Egypt wealth and power.

The name “Nile” is from the Greek word *neilos* and the Latin *nilus* meaning “dark blue” and the Hebrew term is *y^eor*. The ancient Egyptians deified it as *Hapi* because it was so essential to the life and prosperity of Egypt, however, it is known to modern Egyptians as *El Bahr*, “the sea” (cf. Nah 3:8).

The “Nile” is the longest river in the world and the father of African rivers, flowing more than 4,160 miles from central Africa north through the desert to a rich delta area on the Mediterranean Sea.

The source of the Nile is derived from two rivers: the Blue Nile from Ethiopia and the White Nile from Lake Victoria in central Africa. From its principal source, Lake Victoria, in east central Africa, the Nile flows through Uganda, Sudan and Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea, a distance of 3,470 miles and from its remotest headstream in Burundi, the river is 4,160 miles long. The river basin covers an area of more than 1,293,000 square miles and about one-tenth of the African continent.

The Blue Nile provides approximately twice as much water as the White Nile during the rainy season and this flood water, with the soil that it eroded, provided fertile top soil for the agriculture of northern Egypt. Low flood levels usually meant a famine year, while a high flood level would result in a year of plenty. The Aswan Dam and the High Dam now enable the modern nation of Egypt to control these floods and provide a more constant flow of water.

Egyptians had religious celebrations at the beginning of the annual flooding of the Nile. The river was also one of the chief methods of transportation for the Egyptians. The Nile delta produced papyrus which the Egyptians wove together to make household mats, baskets, sails for their boats, and paper. The Nile supported a fishing industry as well, and ancient drawings show the Pharaohs hunting wild game in the thick undergrowth of the Nile Valley.

Genesis 41:2-4 records Pharaoh's first dream.

Genesis 41:2

“And lo, from the Nile there came up seven cows, sleek and fat; and they grazed in the marsh grass.”

Genesis 41:3

“Then behold, seven other cows came up after them from the Nile, ugly and gaunt, and they stood by the other cows on the bank of the Nile.”

Genesis 41:4

“The ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven sleek and fat cows. Then Pharaoh awoke.”

The fact that the cows came up out of the Nile is not unusual but would be familiar to Pharaoh since cows like to stand half-submerged in the Nile among its reeds to seek relief from the heat and insects and then come up out of the water for pasture.

In a religious sense, the cows in his dream would have impressed him since in ancient Egypt, the cow was the symbol of Isis, the goddess of the all-sustaining earth. In Egyptian hieroglyphics, the cow represented the earth, agriculture, and food and the Nile, by its overflowing, was the source of the fertility of the land. It is interesting that in the Egyptian “Book of the Dead,” the chief religious writing in Egypt, the god of vegetation and the nether world, Osiris, is represented as a great bull accompanied by seven cows. Therefore, the seven cows were a part of his religious frame of reference and would get his attention.

The cows would also impress Pharaoh in an economic sense since they were abundant in Egypt and were important to its economy.

“Sleek” is the noun *yapheh* (hp#y*) (yaw-feh), which means, “beautiful” and the noun *mar’eh* (ha#r+m^), which means, “appearance” and thus, these first seven cows were “beautiful in appearance.”

These first seven cows are described in Genesis 41:2 and 18 as being “fat,” which translates the adjective *bari’* (ayr!B*) (baw-ree), “fat” and the noun *basar* (rc*B*) (baw-sawr), “flesh, body,” and together they literally mean, “fat of flesh.”

In Genesis 41:3, “behold,” which is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!) prepares the reader

for something unusual and further links this first dream with the second.

In Genesis 41:3, we see another seven cows coming up out of the Nile that are described as “ugly and gaunt.”

“Ugly” translates the adjective *ra`* (ur^), “bad” which is used in contrast with the noun *yapheh* (hp#y*) (yaw-feh), “beautiful” and it modifies the noun *mar’eh* (ha#r+m^), “appearance,” thus these seven cows were “ugly in appearance.”

“Gaunt” translates the adjective *daq* (qD^), “thin,” which is used in contrast with the adjective *bari’* (ayr!B*) (baw-ree), “fat” and it modifies the noun *basar* (rc*B*) (baw-sawr), “flesh, body,” and together they literally mean, “thin of flesh.”

Therefore, the seven cows described in Genesis 41:3 and 19, which were ugly in appearance and thin and are in direct contrast to the first seven cows, which were beautiful and fat.

The first seven cows that were beautiful and fat would be symbolic of prosperity since fat cows are the direct result of abundant pastureland whereas the ugly and thin cows would be symbolic of famine since thin and ugly cows are the direct result of a lack of abundant pastureland. Then, something unusual and shocking took place where the ugly and thin cows consumed the beautiful fat cows. We would expect the fatter beautiful cows to consume the thin and ugly ones but this is not the case indicating something unusual. This shocking and unusual occurrence in his dream awoke Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:5-7 records Pharaoh’s second dream, which is “agricultural” and has the same meaning as his first dream, thus emphasizing the future fulfillment of these dreams (See Genesis 37:5-11; 41:25, 32). The doubling of the dream emphasizes that what is spoken of in the dream, prosperity and famine, is firmly decided by God and will come to pass in Egypt. An isolated dream might be misinterpreted but two dreams with the same meaning confirm the interpretation.

Genesis 41:5

“He fell asleep and dreamed a second time; and behold, seven ears of grain came up on a single stalk, plump and good.”

Genesis 41:6

“Then behold, seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them.”

Genesis 41:7

“The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. Then Pharaoh awoke, and behold, it was a dream.”

“Ears of grain” is the noun *shibboleth* (tl#B)v! (shib-bo-leth), which in Egypt would be wheat.

Egypt was famous in the ancient world not only for its cattle but also its wheat and was known as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire.

Like Pharaoh’s first dream that appealed to his Egyptian frame of reference, so this second dream would appeal to his Egyptian frame of reference since Egypt was known as the granary of the ancient world.

In Pharaoh’s second dream, he saw seven ears of grain, which would be wheat in Egypt, coming up on one stalk, plump and good. Like the first seven cows, in Pharaoh’s first dream, these seven ears of grain were “fat” symbolizing prosperity and would further link this second dream with the first. These first seven ears of grain are described as being “good,” which refers to the fact that they exceeded expectations of Egyptian farmers indicating an exceptional crop. The fact that these seven ears of grain came up out of one stalk, fat and good, was an exceptional phenomenon symbolizing abundance.

In Genesis 41:6, “behold,” which is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!) prepares the reader for something unusual and further links this second dream with the first.

Like the second set of seven cows, in Pharaoh’s first dream, these second set of seven ears of grain were “thin” which further links this second dream with the first. Like the thin cows in Pharaoh’s dream, the thin ears of grain would be symbolic of famine and a lack of abundance.

The “east wind” mentioned in Genesis 41:6 is called by Egyptians *khamisin* and refers to the

wind that blew into Egypt from the Sahara Desert (See Hosea 13:15) in late spring and early fall and often brought famine since it withered vegetation (See Isaiah 40:7; Ezekiel 17:10).

Notice that unlike the first seven ears of grain, these last seven are not said to come upon a single stalk, thus implying that each grew on its own stalk. In appearance, these seven ears of grain, which were thin and scorched by the east wind from the Sahara, are in direct contrast to the first ears of grain, which were plump and good.

The first ears of grain that were plump and good would be symbolic of prosperity since plump ears of grain are the direct result of excellent weather conditions whereas the thin ears of grain would be symbolic of famine since thin ears of grains are the direct result of extremely bad weather conditions. Then, just as in Pharaoh’s first dream, something unusual and shocking takes place in his second dream where the thin ears of grain swallowed up the plump and good ears of grain. We would expect the fatter ears of grain to swallow up the thin ones but this is not the case indicating something unusual. Just as in his first dream, this shocking and unusual occurrence in Pharaoh’s second dream disturbed him and awoke him.

The phrase “behold it was a dream” implies that the dream was so vivid that Pharaoh thought it was really happening until he woke up. The repetition of the same theme with different figures impressed and disturbed Pharaoh causing him to wonder of their meaning and spend the rest of the night sleepless awaiting sunrise.

In Genesis 41:8, Pharaoh summons the priests who were skilled in the occult sciences in order to interpret his dreams but there were none that could.

Genesis 41:8

“Now in the morning his spirit was troubled, so he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all its wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but there was no one who could interpret them to Pharaoh.”

“Spirit” is the noun *ruach* (jWr) (roo-akh), which refers to Pharaoh’s soul since only believers possess a human spirit and Pharaoh was an unbeliever.

Unbelievers are in the image of the first Adam who did not possess a human spirit until after he was saved whereas believers are in the image of the last Adam who possesses a human spirit. Eternal life resides in the human spirit and so therefore unbelievers do not have a human spirit since they do not possess eternal life due to their rejection of Christ as Savior (See John 3:1-18). The believer receives a human spirit at the moment of salvation through regeneration, thus making him “trichotomous” in the sense that he has a body, soul and human spirit.

In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul’s statement that the first Adam, “became a living soul” clearly indicates that God did not create Adam with a human spirit since if He did, the Scriptures would not have called him a “living soul” but rather a “spirit” as the Scriptures state of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Adam.

1 Corinthians 15:45, “So also it is written, ‘The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL.’ The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

Therefore, the soul of Pharaoh was disturbed or agitated by the dreams he had since he was sure the dreams had meaning.

Bob Deffinbaugh, “The dream was distressing to the Pharaoh because it was twice experienced in varying forms, interrupted by his being awakened. The meaning was a puzzle, for the seven lean cows remained lean and gaunt, even after consuming the fat cattle. The same was true with the grain. It was not normal for cows to eat cows or grain to consume grain, but surely the lean things should have been fattened by what they ate. Something had to be wrong, but what was it?” (The Book of Genesis, page 305, Biblical Studies, 1997).

Pharaoh sensed something ominous about the dreams since the symbols of Egypt’s gods and the prosperity of the land had been destroyed in his dreams and so he sought out the help of individuals who were involved in the occult.

“All the magicians of Egypt” is composed of the adjective *kol* (IK) (kole), “all” and the noun *chartom* (<f)r+j^ (khar-tome), “the magicians” and the proper noun *mitsrayim* (<y!r^x+m!) (mits-ra-yim), “Egypt.”

The noun *chartom*, “magicians” were a class of intelligent and clever priests involved with the occult, which is driven by demons. These occult priests occupied themselves with the arts and sciences of the Egyptians, the hieroglyphic writings, astrology, and the interpretation of dreams, the foretelling of events, and magic and channeling and were regarded as the possessors of secret arts. These were the same individuals who confronted Moses and with the aid of the fallen angels were able to duplicate many of the miracles that Moses performed but could not duplicate others (See Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18-19; Daniel 2:10-11).

When the adjective *kol* is used with a singular anarthrous noun as it is here in Genesis 41:8, it is used in a distributive sense meaning “each and every one.” Therefore, we see that Pharaoh sent messengers to summon each and every one of his magicians to interpret his dreams.

“All its wise men” is composed of the adjective *kol* (IK) (kole), “all” and the noun *chakham* (<k*j) (khaw-kawm), “wise men.”

The noun *chakham* refers to an individual with a professional skill and mastery and understanding of a particular subject. The subject in view depends upon the context and in Genesis 41:8, it refers to skilled activity in occult sciences as indicated by the use of the noun *chartom*, “magicians.”

The fact that *chakham* refers to an individual skilled and having masterful understanding of a subject, which is determined by the context indicates that these two terms *chartom*, “magicians” and *chakham*, “wise men” form a “hendiadys.”

“Hendiadys” takes place when two nouns are used to express one idea or concept and it literally means “one by means of two” and takes place when the author uses two words but only one idea is intended. The two words are of the same parts of speech, i.e., two nouns, and are always joined together by the conjunction “and” and are also always in the same case. One of the two words expresses the thing, and the other intensifies it by being changed (if a noun) into an adjective of the superlative degree, which is, by this means, made especially emphatic.

In Genesis 41:8, we have two nouns *chartom*, “magicians” and *chakham*, “wise men” and they are separated by the conjunction “and.” The noun *chakham*, “wise men” modifies and intensifies the meaning of the noun *chartom*, “magicians.” Therefore, the figure of “hendiadys” indicates that these two phrases “for all the magicians of Egypt and all its wise men” do “not” refer to two separate groups of individuals but rather refer to one group of individuals. The figure of “hendiadys” indicates that Pharaoh called for his priests who were the most skilled in the occult sciences.

“Sent” is the verb *shalach* (jl^v*) (shaw-lakh), which refers to “persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers.”

“Called for” is the verb *qara* (ar*q*) (kaw-raw), which means, “to summon to enter your presence.”

Therefore, these two verbs indicate that Pharaoh sent messengers to summon into his presence each and every one of the Egyptian priests who were skilled in the occult sciences in order to get their interpretation of his dreams.

The fact that none of the Egyptian priests who were masters of the occult sciences could interpret Pharaoh’s dreams for him does not mean that they did not make any suggestions as to the meaning of the dreams but rather that none of their interpretations satisfied Pharaoh.

In the Hebrew text of Genesis 41:8, “dreams” is the singular form of the noun *chalom* whereas “them” is the third person masculine plural pronominal suffix. The apparent contradiction is reconciled when we realize that the narrator and Pharaoh himself saw the dreams as one as indicated by the singular form of the noun *chalom* since they both had the same meaning whereas the Egyptian occult priests did not interpret them as one. Therefore, the singular form of the noun *chalom*, “dreams” indicates the meaning of the two dreams is identical and thus unified.

These Egyptian priests who were masters of the occult sciences were unable to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams since they were unbelievers who have no capacity unlike believers to understand divine revelation, which Pharaoh’s two dreams were. Only a believer would have the capacity to

understand revelation from God. Therefore, the Egyptian priests who were the most skilled in the occult sciences and who were unbelievers had no capacity to interpret Pharaoh’s dream.

Unlike Joseph, these Egyptian priests who were skilled in the occult sciences did “not” possess the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is expressed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which presents God’s provision of eternal salvation for the entire human race through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (See 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16).

God’s wisdom resides in the mind and thinking of Christ, which appears in the written Word of God.

Colossians 2:3, “in whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

The believer acquires the wisdom of God by letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in his soul, which gives him the capacity to glorify God in whatever circumstance or relationship in life.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

In Genesis 41:9-13, we have the record of Pharaoh’s cupbearer whose dream Joseph interpreted two years before making Pharaoh aware of Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams.

Genesis 41:9

“Then the chief cupbearer spoke to Pharaoh, saying, ‘I would make mention today of my own offenses.’”

“The Cupbearer” was an important official who held a position of trust in the Egyptian court since he was responsible for protecting the king from being poisoned by the beverages he was served.

“Offenses” is the noun *chet*^e (af+j@) (khate), which refers to an “offense against another person.”

In Genesis 40:1, the verb form of the noun *chet*^e appears, which is *chata* (af*j*) (khaw-taw), “offended” and means, “to be guilty of a moral wrongdoing,” which causes offense to another.

In Genesis 41:9, the noun *chet*^e appears in the plural and not the singular indicating that the chief cupbearer is not only about to mention his offense against Pharaoh but also Joseph since if he was only going to mention his offense against Pharaoh, the word would be in the singular. Therefore, the plural form of this word indicates that the chief cupbearer is admitting that he was guilty of a moral wrongdoing by not fulfilling Joseph's request to make Pharaoh aware of his situation.

Genesis 40:23 reveals that the chief cupbearer deliberately chose to ignore Joseph's request.

Genesis 40:23, "Yet the chief cupbearer did not remember Joseph, but forgot him."

"Did not remember" is composed of the negative particle *lo'* (אֹ) and the verb *zakhar* (רָכַז*) (zaw-kar), which does "not" refer to the act of remembering or reflecting but rather it refers to an act of recognition, the formal acknowledgement of someone entitled to consideration and the right to be heard or given attention. Therefore, after Pharaoh's cupbearer was restored he did not recognize Joseph before Pharaoh in the sense that he did not formally acknowledge Joseph to Pharaoh even though Joseph was entitled to consideration and the right to be heard and given attention since Joseph had compassion for him at a time of great need.

"Forgot" is the verb *shakhach* (שָׁחַח*) (shaw-kakh), which denotes "a willful choice to ignore something that a person knows he is to do" and so the cupbearer willfully chose to ignore fulfilling Joseph's request.

So this was not a mental lapse on the part of Pharaoh's cupbearer but rather a "moral" lapse, which manifested his self-centeredness as a result of being a slave to the sin nature. Therefore, in Genesis 41:9, the plural form of *chet*^e, "offenses" indicates that by not telling Pharaoh about Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams, the cupbearer has committed an offense against both Joseph and Pharaoh but the cupbearer's failure was part of the providence of God.

The cupbearer's deliberate refusal to present Joseph's case to Pharaoh resulted in Joseph remaining in prison for another two years since Genesis 41:1 says that Pharaoh had a dream two

years after the cupbearer was restored by Pharaoh. Even though the moral lapse by Pharaoh's cupbearer was evil, God meant it for good since it was a part of the providence of God since God did not want Joseph to leave prison and Egypt (See Genesis 50:20).

Suppose that after he was restored, the cupbearer told Pharaoh about Joseph and then released Joseph so that he could return to his father in Canaan. This would have been bad since Pharaoh needed Joseph around when he had his dreams regarding the seven years of plenty and seven years of worldwide famine.

If Joseph didn't remain in Egypt, then he would have never been there to interpret Pharaoh's dream and if he doesn't interpret Pharaoh's dream, Joseph doesn't get promoted by Pharaoh to prime minister of Egypt.

If Joseph never gets promoted to the prime minister of Egypt by Pharaoh, then there will be no one capable in Pharaoh's administration to follow God directions to store up enough grain during the seven years of prosperity so as to be prepared for the seven years of world-wide famine.

If Joseph is not in place to administrate the Egyptian government under Pharaoh during the seven years of plenty and seven years of famine, then Joseph's family dies of starvation in Canaan since Israel sends his sons to Egypt to get food to deal with the famine in Canaan (See Genesis 42).

If Joseph's family dies of starvation, then the nation of Israel dies in its infancy and if so, then the Savior cannot come into the world and then there would be no salvation for man and no fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) and thus making God unfaithful.

The next two years trained Joseph for the great position that he would be promoted to by Pharaoh as a result of interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.

From the human perspective, such circumstances are unfair and lead to discouragement but from the divine perspective, one can see that God causes all circumstances to work together for God for those who love Him.

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

If Joseph looked at the cupbearer willfully forgetting his request from the human perspective, he would be greatly discouraged and disillusioned. However, from the divine perspective, Joseph’s imprisonment for another two years would continue to further to develop Christ-like character in him and prepare for the great work that would be his in just two short years.

During the years that Joseph was imprisoned, he possessed and maintained a dynamic mental attitude with love, joy, peace and no bitterness and resentment because he trusted that God would fulfill His Word to him in the form of the two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Joseph’s two prophetic dreams, which were revelation from God about the future of Joseph and his family served as a great encouragement to Joseph while he was incarcerated and enslaved in Egypt for fourteen years.

In our day and age, the Scriptures, which are revelation from God concerning our future (See 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), serve as encouragement to us when we go through adversity and underserved suffering in our lives.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

The revelation from God that Joseph received in his two dreams constituted the “Word of God” for him whereas here in the church age, the Word of God appears in the original languages of Scripture.

Genesis 41:10

“Pharaoh was furious with his servants, and he put me in confinement in the house of the captain of the bodyguard, both me and the chief baker.”

The cupbearer’s imprisonment two years before is recorded in Genesis 40:1-4.

“Confinement” is the noun *mishmar* (rm*v+m!) (mish-mawr), which means, “custody.” Therefore, Pharaoh placed his cupbearer and baker in the “custody” of the captain of the bodyguard, who was Potiphar.

The expression “the captain of the bodyguard” refers to Potiphar who was the leader of not only the royal bodyguards offering protection to Pharaoh and his family but also he was one of the royal executioners for Pharaoh who executed capital sentences ordered by Pharaoh.

“House” is composed of the noun *bayith* (ty!B^) (bah-yith), which means, “house” and the articular noun *sohar* (rh^s)) (so-har), which means, “prison,” thus a “prison house” and was a fortified prison and was usually attached to the dwelling of such an officer as Potiphar.

“The baker” was also an important official who held a position of trust in the Egyptian court since he was responsible for preparing the food that the king would eat.

Genesis 41:11

“We had a dream on the same night, he and I; each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream.”

Genesis 41:12

“Now a Hebrew youth was with us there, a servant of the captain of the bodyguard, and we related them to him, and he interpreted our dreams for us. To each one he interpreted according to his own dream.”

The dreams of the cupbearer and baker and the interpretation of these dreams by Joseph are recorded in Genesis 40:5-19.

Like Joseph’s dreams, the dream of the cupbearer and the baker were prophetic in nature dealing with the future of each man and were revelation from God since Joseph was able to interpret them only with God’s help. Both dreams occurred during the same night but each dream pertained to the future of each man and would require a different interpretation revealing that each man’s future contrasted with the other in that one would die and the other live.

Just as Joseph's two dreams, which appear in Genesis 37:5-11, were a revelation of God's sovereign will for Joseph and his entire family so the dreams of the cupbearer and the baker were a revelation of the sovereign will of God for both men. These dreams would give Joseph an opportunity to come to Pharaoh's attention who later on would have a dream that related to the future of his nation, which needed interpretation, which Joseph provided with the help of God.

"Hebrew" is the proper noun *'ivri* (yr!b+u!) (iv-ree), which first appears in Genesis 14:13 to describe Abraham as a legitimate and well-known descendant of Shem through Eber and was therefore, in the line of the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15. Therefore, the term "Hebrew" denotes Joseph's nationality in contrast with other nationalities in the land of Canaan and the Egyptians (cf. Gen. 43:32; Ex. 1:15; 2:11; 21:2) and the Egyptians.

Like Potiphar's wife, Pharaoh's chief cupbearer use of the term "Hebrew" expresses his "xenophobia," which is an "unreasonable fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers." This racial bigotry that the Egyptians had towards the Israelites is illustrated in Genesis 43:32, which records that the Egyptians did not eat with the Hebrews since that was repulsive to them.

"Youth" is the noun *na`ar* (ru^n^a) (nah-ar), which refers in context refers to a "young man" of marriageable age.

Joseph was thirty years of age when the cupbearer made Pharaoh aware of Joseph and his ability to interpret dreams since Genesis 41:46 records Joseph as 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt after interpreting Pharaoh's dreams.

The fact that the cupbearer described Joseph as "a Hebrew youth" who was a "servant of the captain of the bodyguard" reveals that he considered Joseph as an insignificant part of Egyptian society, which indicates why he didn't bother telling Pharaoh about Joseph in the first place.

Genesis 41:13

"And just as he interpreted for us, so it happened; he restored me in my office, but he hanged him."

The cupbearer's restoration and the baker's execution, which were in fulfillment of Joseph's interpretation of each man's dream is recorded in Genesis 40:20-22.

"Hanged" is the verb *talah* (hl^T*) (taw-law), which means, "to impale" since the baker was decapitated as indicated by Joseph's prediction in Genesis 40:19, "Pharaoh will lift up your head from you" thus making it impossible for him to be hanged.

The cupbearer's eyewitness testimony regarding Joseph's ability to interpret dreams prepares Pharaoh and his cabinet to accept Joseph's interpretation as being the Word of God (See Psalm 105:19).

The statement "just as he (Joseph) had interpreted to us, so it happened" demonstrates that Joseph's interpretations of the dreams of the cupbearer and baker were inspired by God and was another demonstration that "the Lord was with Joseph" (See Genesis 39:21).

Genesis 41:14 records Pharaoh after hearing his cupbearer relate that Joseph interpreted his dream, when Pharaoh imprisoned him two years before, sending for Joseph whose in prison in order that Joseph might interpret his dream.

Genesis 41:14

"Then Pharaoh sent and called for Joseph, and they hurriedly brought him out of the dungeon; and when he had shaved himself and changed his clothes, he came to Pharaoh."

"Pharaoh" was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. and means, "great house" and history records that the "Pharaoh" that summoned Joseph into his presence to interpret his dreams would have been Sesostris II (1897-1878 B.C.).

"Sent" is the verb *shalach* (jl^v^*) (shaw-lakh), which refers to "persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers."

"Called for" is the verb *qara* (ar^q^*) (kaw-raw), which means, "to summon to enter your presence."

These two verbs were used in Genesis 41:8 to denote that Pharaoh sent messengers to summon into his presence each and every one of the Egyptian priests who were skilled in the occult

sciences in order to get their interpretation of his dreams. In Genesis 41:14, they are used to denote that after hearing about Joseph's ability to interpret dreams from his cupbearer, Pharaoh sent messengers to summon into his presence Joseph.

"They" refers to the messengers that Pharaoh sent to summon Joseph into his presence to interpret his dreams.

"They hurriedly brought him out" is the verb *ruts* (JWr) (roots), which means, "to run," and in the hiphil (causative) stem, it means that Pharaoh's messengers "caused" Joseph to run so as to not keep Pharaoh waiting.

These three verbs, *shalach*, "sent," *qara*, "called for" and *ruts*, "they hurriedly brought him out" expresses the urgency that Pharaoh felt since his dreams were related to the welfare of his nation.

"Dungeon" is the noun *bor* (rw)B (bore), which was the prison house located in the basement of the captain of the bodyguard's house who was Potiphar, Joseph's slave master.

Even though, Pharaoh's messengers made Joseph run so as to not keep Pharaoh waiting, they also wanted him to enter Pharaoh's presence properly dressed and in appropriate Egyptian style so they had Joseph shave both his head and face and change his clothes.

Egyptians were clean shaven for hygienic reasons while most Asiatics usually wore beards and so Joseph shaved for the first time. A beard was a mark of dignity among the Hebrews such as Joseph (cf. II Samuel 10:4-5; Ezra 9:3), but for the Egyptian it was an offensive thing.

Harold G. Stigers commenting on this, writes, "The bath and the shave are designed to make Joseph ritually and socially acceptable to Pharaoh. None of the Egyptians wore beards. Beards shown on the monuments are ceremonial and even Queen Hatshepsut wore an imitation one, as is to be seen on the representations left to her after Thutmose III had her images defaced or removed. Change of clothing was necessary to suit Joseph's status as a wise counselor" (A Commentary on Genesis, page 288, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

The change of clothes was necessary in order to have an audience with Pharaoh and symbolized a

change of Joseph's social status. The fact that Pharaoh summoned Joseph into his presence to interpret his dream after hearing his cupbearer relate that Joseph interpreted his dream when Pharaoh imprisoned him two years before was a manifestation of the "providence of God."

The fact that Pharaoh summoned Joseph into his presence to interpret his dream was a manifestation of the providence of God in that this occurrence was not by chance or fate but because it was a part of God's will. Therefore, the Lord delivered Joseph from prison since all the events in Joseph's life were according to the providence and will of God.

Psalm 113:5-8, "Who is like the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people."

1 Samuel 2:7-8, "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and He set the world on them."

Psalm 31:15-16, "My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. Make Your face to shine upon Your servant; Save me in Your lovingkindness.:"

Psalm 71:2-3, "In Your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; Incline Your ear to me and save me. Be to me a rock of habitation to which I may continually come; You have given commandment to save me, for You are my rock and my fortress."

When Pharaoh released Joseph from prison to interpret his dream, it ended fourteen years of slavery for Joseph since Genesis 41:46 records Joseph as 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt and Genesis 37:2 records Joseph as 17 years old when he was sold to Potiphar in Egypt.

When Pharaoh released Joseph from prison, Joseph experienced the Lord delivering him “out of” his adversity whereas during his fourteen years of slavery he experienced the deliverance of the Lord “in” his adversity.

During the fourteen years that Joseph was in slavery and during his imprisonment, he possessed and maintained a dynamic mental attitude with love, joy, peace and no bitterness and resentment because he trusted that God would fulfill His Word to him in the form of the two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. He learned during these fourteen years to walk by faith and not by sight.

2 Corinthians 5:7, “for we walk by faith, not by sight.”

Joseph’s two prophetic dreams, which were revelation from God about the future of Joseph and his family served as a great encouragement to Joseph while he was incarcerated for fourteen years in Egypt.

Since Joseph trusted the Word of God, he was able to transcend his tremendous adversity and injustice directed towards him and so he would agree with what Paul said in Philippians 4:12-13.

Philippians 4:12, 13

“I have experienced not only poverty but also I have experienced prosperity. By means of every circumstance and by means of all kinds of situations I am intimately acquainted with not only satiation, but also starvation, not only prosperity, but also destitution.”

“I possess the power to overcome all kinds of situations by means of the one whose word empowers me.”

Like Paul, the Word of God, which is alive and powerful, gave Joseph the power or capacity to be able to persevere and endure and not fall victim to self-pity and bitterness and disillusionment.

Perseverance is being steadfast and faithful in applying the Word of God despite the many obstacles and cares of life in the cosmic system of Satan.

1 Timothy 6:11, “But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness,

godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

Luke 8:15, “But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.”

Romans 8:25, “But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.”

Endurance is the power of bearing anything such as hardship or trial.

1 Peter 2:20, “For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.”

2 Timothy 2:12, “If we endure, we will also reign with Him.”

2 Timothy 2:10, “For this reason I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen, so that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus and with it eternal glory.”

Like Paul, Joseph was not intimidated by adverse circumstances. Like Paul, the application of the Word of God enabled the Holy Spirit to provide Joseph with divine viewpoint and the divine perspective which would protect his heart and thoughts from being intimidated by adversity.

Like Paul, Joseph equated adversity with prosperity, he equated poverty and prosperity, satiation and starvation, prosperity and destitution because he sees the Lord’s hand in each extreme circumstance since He controls human history as Sovereign Ruler of the cosmos and thus circumstances.

Trusting the Word of God produces a dynamic mental attitude toward life in that it gives us the capacity to transcend our adverse circumstances so as not be a slave to them and preventing them from dictating our happiness. The fact that Joseph trusted in the Word of God that came in the form of the two prophetic dreams enabled Joseph to experience in his own life the spiritual principle that God causes all things to work together for good for those who love God.

Romans 8:28, “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Genesis 41:15-16 records Joseph refusing to exploit for personal advantage his ability to interpret dreams when speaking to Pharaoh but instead ascribes to God his ability to interpret dreams, which demonstrates his great humility.

Genesis 41:15

“Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘I have had a dream, but no one can interpret it; and I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it.’”

“Dream” is the singular form of the noun *chalom* (<w)lj&) (khal-ome) even though Pharaoh had two dreams since Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and Pharaoh himself viewed the dreams as identical in meaning.

In Genesis 41:8, Pharaoh summoned into his presence each and every one of the Egyptian priests that were masters of the occult sciences but none of them were able to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams. The reason for this is that they were unbelievers and unlike believers, unbelievers have no capacity to understand divine revelation, which Pharaoh’s two dreams were.

1 Corinthians 2:14-15, “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.”

Victor Hamilton, Chairman of Division of Philosophy and Religion, Asbury College, Wilmore, Kentucky, commenting on dream interpretation, writes, “The technical name for dream interpretation is oneiromancy. An individual who engages in such an activity is called an oneirocritic. It is well known that in the ancient Near East there existed a whole discipline of dream interpretation even to the existence of manuals on the subject. In these cultures dreams were always understood causally. By magic one could induce good dreams. The local deity could be petitioned to turn a dream to good. Or, the ill effect of a bad dream could be cancelled by a

counterspell. It is of no little importance that a science of dream interpretation failed to emerge in Israel. Only two Hebrews engage in oneiromancy—Joseph and Daniel—and that while they belong to the court of heathen kings. The biblical Hebrews never need interpreters to explain their dreams although individual Hebrews may interpret dreams for foreigners. And even when they do, the Scripture emphasizes that neither was able to solve the dream through his own wisdom. It was God who revealed the interpretation to them” (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament, volume 2, pages 744-746).

Pharaoh’s initial statement to Joseph “I have heard it said about you, that when you hear a dream you can interpret it” in the original Hebrew text reads, “I have heard it said about you, that you hear a dream in order to interpret it,” which means that all Joseph had to do to interpret a dream was to hear it.

Pharaoh’s statement is flattery since he is anxious to know the meaning of the dreams and it is an exaggeration on the part of Pharaoh due to his excitement in hearing that there was someone in his kingdom who had the ability to interpret dreams. It also expresses Pharaoh’s belief that Joseph is endowed with magical powers that are superior to those of his occult priests.

Genesis 41:16

“Joseph then answered Pharaoh, saying, ‘It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.’”

Joseph corrects Pharaoh, rejecting his flattery and directs attention away from himself to God. In the original Hebrew text, Joseph’s statement “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer” literally reads, “apart from me, God will answer the peace of mind of Pharaoh” meaning that God will give an answer that will bring Pharaoh peace of mind.

In the original Hebrew text, the phrase “it is not in me” literally means, “apart from me” since it is composed of the negative particle *bal`adhe* (yd@u&l+B^)(bil-ad-ay), which means, “apart from me” and the 1st person common singular pronominal suffix, which means, “me.”

Joseph is saying to Pharaoh that the interpretation of dreams is apart from him but rather originates with God who gave him the ability to interpret dreams.

The statement “God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer” reveals that Joseph’s ability to interpret dreams originates with God who gave him the gift.

Notice that Joseph does “not” use the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, “Lord” when addressing Pharaoh but rather uses *Elohim*, “God” since he is “not” speaking to a member of God’s covenant people but rather an unbeliever. The noun *Elohim*, “God” reveals to Pharaoh the source of his ability to interpret dreams.

“Favorable” is the noun *shalom* (<WLV^> (shaw-lome), which in context means, “peace of mind” implying that Pharaoh’s dreams caused him distress in his soul. We know from Egyptian sources that the Egyptians believed that dreams were indicative of future events, thus Pharaoh believed that his dreams were concerning the future of his nation and the realization that none of his occult priests could interpret his dreams brought him distress of soul. Therefore, Joseph is saying to Pharaoh that God would give him the ability to interpret his dreams, which would give Pharaoh peace of mind.

Just as Joseph was careful to give God the glory for his interpretative gift when speaking to the cupbearer and baker (See Genesis 40:8), so he is careful again to do so when speaking to Pharaoh, thus refuting the Egyptian occult priests who were frauds set up by the kingdom of darkness.

The interpretation of dreams is not a human art but a gift from God. Joseph’s statement is a refutation of Pharaoh’s occult priests expressing the fact that the interpretation of dreams is not a result of learning and manipulation but rather divine revelation.

Joseph’s response to Pharaoh demonstrates his great respect for God and great humility in that he refuses to exploit his God-given ability to strike a deal with Pharaoh for his release from slavery and prison. Humility is putting the glory and honor of God first in your set of priorities and the needs of other human beings ahead of your own needs. Joseph’s response to Pharaoh reveals that he is

putting the glory and honor of God and the needs of Pharaoh ahead of his own needs and desires.

Philippians 2:3-4, “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Humility of mind precedes promotion from God.

1 Peter 5:5-7, “You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

Joseph will be promoted by God because he first was humble in that the glory of God and the well-being of others came before his needs and desires. His response to Pharaoh reveals that speaking the truth and giving honor and glory to God was more important to him than personal advantage.

After fourteen years of slavery and over two years in prison, you would think Joseph would first strike a deal with Pharaoh that would result in his release from slavery and prison before he would interpret Pharaoh’s dream but this is not the case. The fact that Joseph refuses to exploit his situation to his own advantage reveals that he is totally aware that God is sovereign and in complete control of his circumstances, thus he does not take things into his own hands but waits for God to act on his behalf.

Henry M. Morris commenting on Joseph’s response to Pharaoh, writes, “Joseph exhibited by this answer a great growth in spiritual maturity since the time of his own dreams back in Canaan. Then, he had antagonized his family by calling attention to his own superiority. Now, however, he won the confidence and respect of a heathen king and court by denying his own ability and giving full credit to the Lord. His years of slavery and imprisonment had indeed taught him humility and patience. Instead of calling attention to the failures of the other wise men and stressing his own powers, he acted with utmost courtesy and

restraint, and directed all praise to God alone” (The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, pages 579-580).

Just as his father Jacob, also known as Israel, endured fourteen years of divine discipline under Laban, which transformed his character so Joseph endured fourteen years of divine discipline in Egypt, which transformed his character. The fourteen years of slavery and the years of imprisonment have transformed the character of Joseph from a boastful arrogant teenager to a spiritually mature believer who is more concerned about giving God the glory and the well-being of others rather than his own needs and desires.

Just as the divine discipline his father Jacob/Israel endured with Laban forced his father to claim the promises the Lord had made to him at Bethel so the divine discipline that Joseph endured in Egypt forced him to claim the promises that the Lord gave him in the two prophetic dreams recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Just as his father Jacob/Israel saw God prosper him while living with Laban, which caused a change in Jacob in that he grew to love and trust God even more as a result of seeing the Lord fulfill His promises to be with him and protect him and bless him (See Genesis 30:27) so Joseph grew to love and trust God even more as a result of seeing the Lord protect and bless him while in slavery.

Just as his father Jacob/Israel had developed into a great man of God who walked by faith and not by sight when he reentered Canaan after fourteen years of divine discipline with Laban so Joseph had developed into a great man of God after fourteen years of divine discipline in Egypt.

Just as the divine discipline that his father Jacob/Israel endured for fourteen years with Laban was a demonstration of the Lord’s love for Jacob so the divine discipline that Joseph endured for fourteen years in Egypt was a demonstration of the Lord’s love for Joseph.

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer.

Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

Revelation 3:20-21 teaches that the Lord disciplines us not only because He loves us and but also because He wants to reward us.

Revelation 3:20, 21

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

God disciplined Joseph for fourteen years in Egypt in order to reward him by promoting him to the prime minister of Egypt. God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father’s will.

The divine discipline was successful in getting Joseph to recognize that his number one priority in life was conformity to the will of God. God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

God permitted Joseph to reap the fruits of his bad decisions with his brothers so that he might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life.

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness (See 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the pastor-teacher who is the delegated authority in the local assembly, to reprove and rebuke the children of

God from the pulpit with the Word of God as an expression of His love (See 2 Timothy 4:1-4).

Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not train us when we are obedient and punishes us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God.

Hebrews 12:1-11

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”

“fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

“For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.”

“You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin.”

“and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons, ‘MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM.’”

“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”

“But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?”

“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.”

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character and integrity, which is meant by the phrase “share His holiness” and to produce “the fruit of righteousness” according to Hebrews 12:11.

Righteousness deals with proper conduct towards both God and man whereas holiness deals with the character that is result of proper conduct towards God and man. Therefore, we see that the fourteen years of divine discipline that Joseph endured in Egypt produced proper conduct towards both God and man that in turn resulted in godly or Christ-like character.

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and underserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father. Joseph received discipline without getting bitter and complaining and instead recognized and submitted to God’s authority.

Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproofs, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Proverbs 15:32-33, “He who neglects discipline despises himself, but he who listens to reproof acquires understanding. The fear of the LORD is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility.”

Genesis 41:17-24 records Pharaoh relating his dreams to Joseph.

Genesis 41:17-18

“So Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, ‘In my dream, behold, I was standing on the bank of the Nile and behold, seven cows, fat and sleek came up

out of the Nile, and they grazed in the marsh grass.”

“Dream” is the singular form of the noun *chalom* (<w)lj&) (khal-ome) even though Pharaoh had two dreams since Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and Pharaoh himself viewed the dreams as identical in meaning.

Dreams were significant in the cultures of the ancient Middle East and were often considered to be divine revelation and in the days of the patriarchs, dreams were a common means of divine communication and were of a prophetic nature. Pharaoh’s dreams were a revelation from God and were prophetic in nature, revealing to Pharaoh the economic life of Egypt for the next fourteen years.

“My dream” indicates that Pharaoh regarded his dream as a warning about the future of his nation since the Nile River is the setting for his dream, which is significant since this river was literally the lifeline of Egypt, the source of its economy and power and thus the source of Pharaoh’s power.

The first “behold” is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!) and links the two dreams, drawing the reader in, letting him view Pharaoh’s dreams from his perspective.

The second “behold” is also the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which prepares the reader for something unusual and further links this first dream with the second.

The fact that the cows came up out of the Nile is not unusual but would be familiar to Pharaoh since cows like to stand half-submerged in the Nile among its reeds to seek relief from the heat and insects and then come up out of the water for pasture.

In a religious sense, the cows in his dream would have impressed him since in ancient Egypt, the cow was the symbol of Isis, the goddess of the all-sustaining earth. In Egyptian hieroglyphics, the cow represented the earth, agriculture, and food and the Nile, by its overflowing, was the source of the fertility of the land. It is interesting that in the Egyptian “Book of the Dead,” the chief religious writing in Egypt, the god of vegetation and the nether world, Osiris, is represented as a great bull

accompanied by seven cows. Therefore, the seven cows were a part of his religious frame of reference and would get his attention.

The cows would also impress Pharaoh in an economic sense since they were abundant in Egypt and were important to its economy.

Genesis 41:2 describes the first seven cows as being “sleek,” which translates the noun *yapheh* (hp#y*) (yaw-feh), which means, “beautiful” and the noun *mar’eh* (ha#r+m^), which means, “appearance” and thus, these first seven cows were “beautiful in appearance.”

However, in Genesis 41:18, “sleek” translates the adjective *yapheh* (hp#y*) (yaw-feh), which means, “beautiful” and the noun *to’ar* (ra^T) (to-ar), which refers to the shape of the body of these seven cows.

The expression *y^ephoth mar’eh* (tw)py+ ha#r+m^), “beautiful in appearance” in Genesis 41:2 presents a general description of the first seven cows whereas the expression *wiphoth to’ar* (tp)yw! Ra^T), “beautiful in shape” in Genesis 41:18 defines in what way they were beautiful in appearance.

These first seven cows are described in Genesis 41:2 and 18 as being “fat,” which translates the adjective *bari’* (ayr!B*) (baw-ree), “fat” and the noun *basar* (rc*B*) (baw-sawr), “flesh, body,” and together they literally mean, “fat of flesh,” or “fat of body.”

In Genesis 41:18, the expression *b^eri’oth basar*, “fat of body” appears before the expression *wiphoth to’ar*, “beautiful in shape” whereas in Genesis 41:2 it appears after the expression *y^ephoth mar’eh*, “beautiful in appearance” since the emphasis in Genesis 41:18 is to define in what way these seven cows were beautiful.

The first seven cows that were beautiful and fat would be symbolic of prosperity since fat cows are the direct result of abundant pastureland.

Genesis 41:19-20

“Lo, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such as I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt and the

lean and ugly cows ate up the first seven fat cows.”

In Genesis 41:19 just as in Genesis 41:3, we see another seven cows coming up out of the Nile that are described as “ugly and gaunt.”

“Ugly” translates the adjective *ra`* (ur[^]) (raw), “bad” which is used in contrast with the noun *yapheh* (hp#y*) (yaw-feh), “beautiful” and it modifies the noun *mar'eh* (ha#r+m[^]), “appearance,” thus these seven cows were “ugly in appearance.”

“Gaunt” translates the adjective *daq* (qD[^]), “thin,” which is used in contrast with the adjective *bari'* (ayr!B*) (baw-ree), “fat” and it modifies the noun *basar* (rc*B*) (baw-sawr), “flesh, body,” and together they literally mean, “thin of flesh.”

Therefore, the seven cows described in Genesis 41:3 and 19, which were ugly in appearance and thin and are in direct contrast to the first seven cows, which were beautiful and fat.

The ugly and thin cows would be symbolic of famine since thin and ugly cows are the direct result of a lack of abundant pastureland

As we noted earlier, in Pharaoh's account in Genesis 41:19, these seven cows are further described as “poor” whereas in the narrator's account in Genesis 41:3, they are not.

“Poor” is the adjective *dal* (ID[^]), which means, “weak” in the sense that these seven cows were deprived of sufficient pastureland, thus the word emphasizes their weakened condition.

As we noted earlier, unlike the narrator's account of these cows in Genesis 41:3, Pharaoh in his account adds, “I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt.”

Pharaoh's statement “I had never seen for ugliness in all the land of Egypt” expresses his fear for the well-being of his nation.

Then, something unusual and shocking took place where the ugly and thin cows consumed the beautiful fat cows. We would expect the fatter beautiful cows to consume the thin and ugly ones but this is not the case indicating something unusual. This shocking and unusual occurrence in his dream awoke Pharaoh.

Genesis 41:21

“Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before. Then I awoke.”

Pharaoh's statement “Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before” according to Joseph's interpretation in Genesis 41:31 means that the seven years of prosperity will be forgotten because of the severity of the seven years of famine.

Genesis 41:22-24 records Pharaoh's account of his second dream and Genesis 41:5-7 presents the narrator's account of this dream. Pharaoh's second dream is “agricultural” and has the same meaning as his first dream, thus emphasizing the future fulfillment of these dreams (See Genesis 37:5-11; 41:25, 32).

Genesis 41:22

“I saw also in my dream, and behold, seven ears, full and good, came up on a single stalk.”

“Ears of grain” is the noun *shibboleth* (tl#B)v!) (shib-bo-leth), which in Egypt would be wheat.

Egypt was famous in the ancient world not only for its cattle but also its wheat and was known as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire. Like Pharaoh's first dream that appealed to his Egyptian frame of reference, so this second dream would appeal to his Egyptian frame of reference since Egypt was known as the granary of the ancient world.

In Pharaoh's second dream, he saw seven ears of grain, which would be wheat in Egypt, coming up on one stalk, plump and good. Like the first seven cows, in Pharaoh's first dream, these seven ears of grain were “full” symbolizing prosperity and would further link this second dream with the first.

In Pharaoh's account in Genesis 41:22, he uses the adjective *male* (al@m*) (maw-lay), “full” whereas the narrator in his account in Genesis 41:5 employs the adjective *bari'* (ayr!B*) (baw-ree), “fat.”

In Genesis 41:22, the adjective *male*, “full” emphasizes the high quality of these seven ears of

grain whereas in Genesis 41:4, the adjective *bari*, “fat” emphasizes the size of these seven ears of grain. Therefore, the seven years of prosperity, which are represented by these seven ears of grain would not only be the result of the large quantity of grain harvested but also be the result of the high quality of grain harvested during this period.

These first seven ears of grain are described as being “good,” which refers to the fact that they exceeded expectations of Egyptian farmers indicating an exceptional crop. The fact that these seven ears of grain came up out of one stalk, fat and good, was an exceptional phenomenon symbolizing abundance.

Genesis 41:23

“and lo, seven ears, withered, thin, and scorched by the east wind, sprouted up after them.”

In Genesis 41:23 just as in Genesis 41:6, “lo,” which is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!) prepares the reader for something unusual and further links this second dream with the first.

Like the second set of seven cows, in Pharaoh’s first dream, these second set of seven ears of grain were “thin” which further links this second dream with the first. Like the thin cows in Pharaoh’s dream, the thin ears of corn would be symbolic of famine and a lack of abundance.

In Pharaoh’s account in Genesis 41:23, he uses the participle form of the verb *tsanum* (<n%x*) (tsaw-nam), “withered” emphasizing the poor quality of these seven ears of grain whereas the narrator in his account in Genesis 41:6 does not employ the word.

Pharaoh uses the verb *tsanum* (<n%x*) (tsaw-nam), “withered” and the narrator does “not” since the word expresses his dismay at the poor condition of these seven ears of grain since wheat made Egypt an economic power in the ancient world.

The “east wind” mentioned in Genesis 41:6 and 32 is called by Egyptians *khamisin* and refers to the wind that blew into Egypt from the Sahara Desert (See Hosea 13:15) in late spring and early fall and often brought famine since it withered vegetation (See Isaiah 40:7; Ezekiel 17:10).

Notice that unlike the first seven ears of grain, these last seven are not said to come upon a single stalk, thus implying that each grew on its own stalk. In appearance, these seven ears of grain, which were thin and scorched by the east wind from the Sahara, are in direct contrast to the first ears of grain, which were plump and good. The first ears of grain that were plump and good would be symbolic of prosperity since plump ears of grain are the direct result of excellent weather conditions. The thin ears of grain would be symbolic of famine since thin ears of grain are the direct result of extremely bad weather conditions.

Then, just as in Pharaoh’s first dream, something unusual and shocking takes place in his second dream where the thin ears of grain swallowed up the plump and good ears of grain.

Genesis 41:24

“and the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears. Then I told it to the magicians, but there was no one who could explain it to me.”

We would expect the fatter ears of grain to swallow up the thin ones but this is not the case indicating something unusual.

The statement “the thin ears swallowed the seven good ears” according to Joseph’s interpretation in Genesis 41:31 means that the seven years of prosperity will be forgotten because of the severity of the seven years of famine.

In Pharaoh’s account in Genesis 41:24, he describes the first seven ears of grain as “good” whereas in Genesis 41:7, the narrator describes them as “plump and full.”

“Good” refers to the fact that these seven ears of grain exceeded expectations of Egyptian farmers indicating an exceptional crop.

As we noted in Genesis 41:22, the adjective *male*, “full” emphasizes the high quality of these seven ears of grain whereas as we noted in Genesis 41:4, the adjective *bari*, “fat” emphasizes the size of these seven ears of grain. Therefore, the seven years of prosperity, which are represented by these seven ears of grain would not only be the result of the large quantity of grain harvested but also be the result of the high quality of grain harvested during this period.

Just as in his first dream, this shocking and unusual occurrence in Pharaoh's second dream disturbed him and awoke him.

"Magicians" is the noun *chartom*, who were a class of intelligent and clever priests involved with the occult, which is driven by demons.

These occult priests occupied themselves with the arts and sciences of the Egyptians, the hieroglyphic writings, astrology, and the interpretation of dreams, the foretelling of events, and magic and channeling and were regarded as the possessors of secret arts.

In Genesis 41:8, the narrator describes these occult priests with the noun *chakham*, "wise men," which describes these priests as skilled in the occult sciences. However, in Genesis 41:24, Pharaoh does "not" describe these occult priests with this word expressing his displeasure with these men in that they could not interpret his dreams.

These Egyptian priests who were masters of the occult sciences were unable to interpret Pharaoh's dreams since they were unbelievers who have no capacity unlike believers to understand divine revelation, which Pharaoh's two dreams were (See 1 Corinthians 2:14-15).

Next, we will read of Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, which are recorded in Genesis 41:25-32.

Joseph's conversation with Pharaoh is divided into two parts: (1) Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams (Genesis 41:25-32). (2) Joseph's recommendation to Pharaoh in light of his interpretation (Genesis 41:33-36).

Joseph's interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams makes four points: (1) In Genesis 41:25-26, Joseph declares that both of Pharaoh's dreams announce the same thing and have the same meaning. (2) In Genesis 41:26-27, Joseph informs Pharaoh that the seven cows and seven ears represent seven years. (3) In Genesis 41:29-31, Joseph tells Pharaoh that the seven years of famine will follow the seven years of prosperity. (4) In Genesis 41:32, Joseph reveals to Pharaoh that the duplication of the dream indicates that the seven years of prosperity followed by the seven years of famine will certainly come to pass.

Genesis 41:25

"Now Joseph said to Pharaoh, 'Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same; God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do.'"

Joseph's statement "Pharaoh's dreams are one and the same" reveals to Pharaoh what he believed to be true in the first place, namely, that both dreams have the same meaning.

In fact, in Genesis 41:17, when recounting his dreams to Joseph, Pharaoh uses the singular form of the noun *chalom* (<w|j&) (khal-ome), "dream" instead of the plural even though Pharaoh had two dreams indicating that Pharaoh himself viewed the dreams as identical in meaning.

Pharaoh's dreams were a revelation from God and were prophetic in nature, revealing to Pharaoh the economic life of Egypt for the next fourteen years.

"Told" is the verb *naghadh* (dg^n*) (naw-gad), which is in the hiphil form and means, "to inform" and refers to revealing previously unknown information to someone.

Joseph's statement "God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do" brings glory to God in that he is acknowledging that God is the source of Pharaoh's dreams. This is the second time that Joseph has made Pharaoh aware that Pharaoh's dreams originated with God since Genesis 41:16 records Joseph informing Pharaoh that the interpretation of dreams is apart from him but rather originates with God who gave him the ability to interpret dreams.

To glorify God is also to reveal some aspect of God's character to someone whether through words or one's conduct and so Joseph is glorifying God in the sense that he is acknowledging to Pharaoh God's sovereignty and omnipotence.

His statement "God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do" reveals to Pharaoh that his dreams were revelation from God who is sovereign over the nations including Egypt.

Isaiah 40:15, 16

"Behold, the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are regarded as a speck of dust on the scales; Behold, He lifts up the islands like fine dust."

“All the nations are as nothing before Him, they are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless.”

Joseph does not use the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, “Lord” but rather uses *Elohim*, “God” since Pharaoh is an unbelieving Gentile.

“God” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes the sovereignty of God over the nations including Egypt and expresses that God is omnipotent or all-powerful and is able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, which was revealed in the two dreams.

Joseph’s statement “God has told to Pharaoh what He is about to do” would reveal to Pharaoh that his dreams were revelation of God’s sovereign will, which He will exercise absolutely and that Pharaoh is under His authority.

The Egyptians regarded Pharaoh as a divine manifestation in human form and so by accepting Joseph’s interpretation of his dreams Pharaoh chose to place himself under Joseph’s God, which God rewarded by preserving the land of Egypt in the coming famine.

Pharaoh’s two prophetic dreams and the seven years of prosperity and famine demonstrate God’s sovereign control over the nations and the lives of individuals like Joseph and God’s sovereign care and protection over the nation of Israel, which would be preserved because of Joseph.

Genesis 41:26

“The seven good cows are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years; the dreams are one and the same.”

Joseph’s statement reveals what Pharaoh believed all along that the seven good cows and good ears both represented seven years and that the meaning of both dreams was the same. The cows and ears of grain were used by God in Pharaoh’s dream since both appealed to Pharaoh’s human frame of reference and were essential to Egypt’s economic power. The seven good cows represented seven years of prosperity since fat cows are the direct result of abundant pastureland and the seven good ears of grain also represented seven years of prosperity since plump ears of corn are the direct result of excellent weather conditions.

Genesis 41:27

“The seven lean and ugly cows that came up after them are seven years, and the seven thin ears scorched by the east wind will be seven years of famine.”

The seven thin and ugly cows that came up after the seven good cows and the seven thin ears that were scorched by the east wind represented seven years of famine and reveals that the seven years of prosperity will immediately be followed by seven years of famine. The ugly and thin cows represented famine since thin and ugly cows are the direct result of a lack of abundant pastureland. The thin ears of grain also represented famine since thin ears of grains are the direct result of extremely bad weather conditions.

Genesis 41:28

“It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh: God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do.”

Joseph’s statement to Pharaoh “It is as I have spoken to Pharaoh” means that his interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams is certain to come to pass since both the dream and his interpretation originate with God.

His statement “God has shown to Pharaoh what He is about to do” is the third time when speaking to Pharaoh that Joseph informs Pharaoh that his dreams and his interpretation originate with God and not with him. This statement not only reveals that Joseph’s interpretation of his dreams originates with God and that God is sovereign over his nation but it also reveals the mercy and compassion of God, which originate with His attribute of love (See Ephesians 2:4-6; James 5:11).

Mercy is an expression of God’s love and means that God is compassionate towards His enemies and pardons them (Luke 6:35-36; Eph. 2:1-7) whereas God’s love is “compassionate” meaning that God intensely desires and will act to alleviate the pain and suffering of another or remove its cause (1 John 3:16-17). The fact God would warn Pharaoh of an approaching economic disaster indicates concern for Pharaoh and his nation as well as all the nations since if God did not care, He would not have warned Pharaoh. It was therefore an attempt by God to evangelize not only Pharaoh

and Egypt but also the entire world since God desires that all men be saved (See John 3:16-18; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

God warned Pharaoh through Joseph and the dreams so that he might take appropriate measures to prepare for the seven years of prosperity and famine.

Another reason why God warned Pharaoh was to facilitate Joseph's promotion to prime minister so that he could administrate the nation of Egypt during this economic crisis so as to deliver Joseph's family, which lived in Canaan and to relocate the nation of Israel to protect it from the Canaanite influence.

Genesis 41:29-31

“Behold, seven years of great abundance are coming in all the land of Egypt and after them seven years of famine will come, and all the abundance will be forgotten in the land of Egypt, and the famine will ravage the land. So the abundance will be unknown in the land because of that subsequent famine; for it will be very severe.”

Joseph's statements in Genesis 41:30 and 31 interpret Pharaoh's statement in Genesis 41:21, “Yet when they had devoured them, it could not be detected that they had devoured them, for they were just as ugly as before.”

His statements reveal to Pharaoh that the seven ugly and gaunt cows devouring the seven good cows and the seven thin ears of grain swallowing up the seven good ears of grain represent that the seven years of famine would be so severe in intensity that the seven previous years of prosperity would be forgotten.

“Behold” is also the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which prepares Pharaoh for something significant and important for him to understand as the leader of the nation of Egypt and makes him aware that the interpretation is divine in origin.

Joseph's interpretation is prophetic revealing to Pharaoh the future of his nation for the next fourteen years, thus Joseph is functioning as a prophet.

Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord GOD does nothing unless He reveals His secret counsel to His servants the prophets.”

Joseph's interpretation emphasizes the future severe famine that is about to come upon the nation of Egypt since just one sentence describes the years of prosperity (See Genesis 41:29) whereas five clauses describe the years of famine (See Genesis 41:30-31). This agrees with Pharaoh's own awareness that his dreams were a warning of impending disaster since the symbols of his nation's economic power were destroyed in the dreams.

“Abundance” is the noun *sava* (ub*c*) (saw-vaw), which denotes that the harvests for the next seven years in Egypt will be abundant resulting in a more than sufficient food supply.

“Great” is the adjective *gadhool* (lw)dG*) (gaw-dole), which describes that the harvests for the next seven years in Egypt will be greater than usual.

“Ravage” is the noun *kalah* (hl*K*) (kaw-law), which is in the piel (intensive) stem and means that the seven years of famine will “consume” the land of Egypt and as a result “destroy” it in that nothing will be able to grow.

Genesis 41:32

“Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about.”

Joseph's statement reveals that the next seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine upon the land of Egypt were a part of God's plan and sovereign will from eternity past, which is called in theology, “the divine decree.”

The “divine decree” is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future (Psa. 2:7; 148:6; Dan. 9:24) and so God rendered certain to take place the seven years of prosperity and famine and it was thus a part of God's plan. The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable

will and so these seven years of famine and prosperity was part of God's plan from eternity past. God used the famine as the means to have Pharaoh promote Joseph to prime minister and to relocate Joseph's family from Canaan to Egypt in order to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works and so the seven years of prosperity and famine was part of God's chosen and adopted plan. The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass and so the seven years of famine and prosperity was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory.

The omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past these seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine and God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. It was God's eternal and immutable will that these seven years of prosperity and famine would take place and God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that the seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine would take place in the exact time that they did. The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history and so therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place the seven years of prosperity and seven years of famine.

Isaiah 46:9-11, "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'; Calling a

bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it."

The seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine in Egypt would be the means God would use to fulfill the prophecy He gave to Joseph that he would rule over his family, which is recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. The prediction of the famine by Joseph and his recommendation in light of this famine would lead to Pharaoh promoting Joseph as prime minister of Egypt who would administrate the nation during the seven years of prosperity and famine.

The famine would cause Joseph's family to go down to Egypt to buy food and this would result in Joseph's brothers bowing down to him in fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. Therefore, these events would be a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Jeremiah 1:12, that the Lord watches over His Word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:12, "Then the LORD said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.'"

In Genesis 41:33-37, we see Joseph making recommendations to Pharaoh in light of his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams.

Genesis 41:33

"Now let Pharaoh look for a man discerning and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt."

"Now" is composed of the conjunction w^e ($w+$) (waw) and the adverb $\`attah$ (hT^*u^{\wedge}) ($at-taw$), which together are used in an emphatic sense meaning, "in fact, now."

The adverb $\`attah$ is frequently used in Scripture to introduce a new development or episode and in Genesis 41:33, along with the conjunction w^e introduces in an emphatic way Joseph's recommendation to Pharaoh in light of his interpretation.

The expression "let Pharaoh" demonstrates Joseph's tactfulness and that he recognizes and respects Pharaoh's authority, which was given to Pharaoh by God since all authority originates with God (See Romans 13:1-7).

Romans 13:1, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”

“Look for” is the verb *ra’ah* (hā*r*) (raw-aw), which in this particular context means, “to search for” someone and so Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh in light of his interpretation that he “search” for someone in Egypt that could administrate the land of Egypt during the next fourteen years.

“Discerning” is the verb *bin* (/yB!) (bene), which refers to the power of judgment and perceptive insight and is manifested in the use of knowledge.

Therefore, Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he search for a man who has discernment in the sense that this man must have the ability to judge and have perceptive insight and can apply the knowledge gained from his interpretation of his dreams.

Pharaoh’s dreams and Joseph’s interpretation were a revelation of God’s will for the nation of Egypt during the next fourteen years and so Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he search for someone who has the spiritual discernment to act in accordance with this revelation.

Discernment refers to the faculty to discern, discriminate, and have acuteness of judgment and understanding in any given situation.

Spiritual discernment refers to the ability to separate, distinguish and choose between what is God’s will and what is evil (See Hebrews 5:14). Therefore, Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he select a man to govern Egypt during the next fourteen years who would accept and act in accordance with the revelation of God’s will for Egypt during the next fourteen years, which was contained in Pharaoh’s dream and his interpretation.

He is recommending to Pharaoh that he search for a man who can learn from the knowledge of God’s will contained in his interpretation that was given to Joseph by the Holy Spirit and then have the capacity to apply that knowledge during the next fourteen years.

Discernment refers to the faculty to discern, discriminate, and have acuteness of judgment and understanding of the character and motives of people. Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he select a man to govern Egypt during the next fourteen years who would possess the faculty to discern, discriminate and have acuteness of judgment and understanding of the character and motives of people so to not be taken advantage of.

Spiritual discernment refers to the power or ability to grasp and comprehend what is obscure to the soulish man. Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he select a man who can govern Egypt over the next fourteen years who would have the ability to grasp and comprehend what is obscure to the soulish man.

Therefore, Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he select a man to govern his nation during the next fourteen years who would accept what the Holy Spirit communicated in Pharaoh’s dreams and Joseph’s interpretation and would choose a course of action in preparation for the coming famine.

“Wise” is the adjective *chakham* (<k*j*) (khaw-kawm), which refers “to professional skill and ability in administrating” the nation of Egypt in preparation for the coming famine.

Not only did Joseph possess the spiritual discernment to understand the revelation from God contained in Pharaoh’s dreams but also he had the ability to administrate the nation of Egypt in that he could select a course of action in preparation for the coming famine based upon his interpretation.

Joseph was prepared to assume the position of prime minister of Egypt since God had prepared him by having him work for Potiphar for fourteen years as his personal servant. His administrative talents were cultivated and fine tuned while working under Potiphar for fourteen years, administrating Potiphar’s entire household and managing his entire estate.

Of course, Joseph is the only man in Egypt who could fulfill these requirements since Pharaoh had just discovered that none of his occult priests could fulfill these requirements. So Joseph in essence, is tactfully saying to Pharaoh, “Don’t

make the same mistake twice.” In fact, by speaking tactfully to Pharaoh, Joseph is demonstrating discernment since discernment also involves “tact,” which is the ability to understand relationships and situations with a view to practical action.

Tact is a keen sense of what to say or do to avoid giving offense and is the skill in dealing with difficult or delicate situations. Without mentioning himself, Joseph is tactfully recommending to Pharaoh in this delicate situation that he select someone to govern Egypt during the next fourteen years who would be like himself, one who is spiritual.

Not only did God give Joseph the ability to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams but He also gave him the ability to formulate a comprehensive plan to meet the coming severe famine. Not only did Pharaoh’s dreams and Joseph’s interpretation of these dreams originate from God but also his plan did as well. Therefore, Joseph is presenting to Pharaoh the option of choosing himself or his occult priests who failed in interpreting Pharaoh’s dreams since they were unbelievers and soulless and did not possess the wisdom of God whereas he was a believer and spiritual and possessed the wisdom of God.

“Set” is the verb *shith* (tyv!) (sheeth), which means, “to put in place, to install, to place in office” and so Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he “install, place in office” a man who could administrate during the next fourteen years.

Genesis 41:34

“Let Pharaoh take action to appoint overseers in charge of the land, and let him exact a fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven years of abundance.”

The expression “let Pharaoh” again demonstrates Joseph’s tactfulness and that he recognizes and respects Pharaoh’s authority, which was given to Pharaoh by God since all authority originates with God (See Romans 13:1-7).

“Appoint” is the verb *paqadh* (dq^P*) (paw-kad), which is in the hiphil (intensive) stem and used in an administrative context meaning, “to appoint a person over something, as well as entrusting someone with the responsibility to do something.”

Therefore, the verb *paqadh* indicates that Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he appoint a person who could be entrusted with the responsibility of administrating the nation of Egypt during the next fourteen years.

“Overseers” is the noun *paqidh* (hD*q | P+) (paw-keed), which is derived from the verb *paqadh*, which refers to a subordinate who has been promoted to a position of authority over others, whether it be as a civil administrator, a military official or cultic overseer.

Therefore, Joseph is recommending to Pharaoh that he appoint and promote individuals into positions of authority as civil administrators who would be subordinate to the wise and discerning chief administrator whom Pharaoh would install in office and would help the chief administrator execute his plan.

Genesis 41:35

“Then let them gather all the food of these good years that are coming, and store up the grain for food in the cities under Pharaoh's authority, and let them guard it.”

Genesis 41:36

“Let the food become as a reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which will occur in the land of Egypt, so that the land will not perish during the famine.”

Joseph recommends to Pharaoh that these administrators take one fifth of the harvest during each of the seven years of prosperity by Pharaoh’s authority and keep it in reserve in the various cities in Egypt and guard it. Consequently, when the seven years of famine arrive, the people of Egypt will be able to live off the reserves and so Pharaoh would need to appoint a man who would have great discipline and foresight to execute this plan.

Genesis 41:32-36 records Joseph recommending that three measures be taken to avert disaster caused by the coming famine: (1) Appoint a wise and discerning national leader (2) Appoint regional overseers (3) Institute urban grain storage facilities.

Genesis 41:37

“Now the proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and to all his servants.”

Genesis 41:37 describes Pharaoh and his servants warmly receiving Joseph’s recommendations even though he had given a gloomy interpretation of the dreams this did not bother Pharaoh since he too viewed his dreams as a warning of impending disaster. Also, Pharaoh warmly received Joseph’s advice because Joseph had followed up his interpretation with positive recommendations as to how Pharaoh was to act to avoid an economic and social disaster in his country.

We must remember that not only was Pharaoh’s dreams divine in origin and Joseph’s interpretation but also Joseph’s recommendations and so it was wise of Pharaoh to accept Joseph’s recommendations. Notice that during Joseph’s entire conversation with Pharaoh that he never mentions his unjust imprisonment or that he was unjustly sold into slavery by his brothers and never attempts to strike a deal with Pharaoh to secure his freedom, which reveals his great humility and his great faith in the Lord to deliver him when He sees fit.

Next, in Genesis 41:38-40, we see that in response to Joseph’s recommendations, Pharaoh promotes Joseph to prime minister of Egypt to administrate the government of Egypt over the next fourteen years.

Genesis 41:38

“Then Pharaoh said to his servants, ‘Can we find a man like this, in whom is a divine spirit?’”

“Servants” is the noun *ʿevedh* (db#u#) (eh-ved), which does “not” refer to a slave who is in bondage to another against his will but rather refers to Pharaoh’s advisers and officials in his cabinet who helped him in deciding state affairs.

Pharaoh’s rhetorical question implies an emphatic negation meaning “We cannot find!” This rhetorical question indicates he knows what he must do, namely, appoint Joseph as chief administrator to execute Joseph’s recommendations during the seven years of prosperity and famine.

“Divine Spirit” is composed of the noun *ruach* (jWr) (roo-akh), “Spirit” and the noun *Elohim* (<yh!Oa\$) (el-o-heem), “Divine.”

This expression does “not” refer to the Holy Spirit since Pharaoh was an unbeliever who had no understanding or concept of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit but rather this expression refers to the manifestation of supernatural ability from God, which was demonstrated by the interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams.

If you recall, Joseph repeatedly confessed having no intrinsic ability of his own to interpret Pharaoh’s dreams but rather he declares that God gave Pharaoh his dreams (See Genesis 41:16) and Pharaoh recognizes God’s power at work in Joseph. Therefore, Pharaoh’s use of this expression gives testimony to his conviction that God gave Joseph the unique supernatural power to interpret dreams.

Joseph demonstrated to Pharaoh an extraordinary, supernatural ability to interpret dreams and to formulate an effective and practical course of action that made Pharaoh aware of God’s presence in Joseph.

Genesis 41:39

“So Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Since God has informed you of all this, there is no one so discerning and wise as you are.’”

Genesis 41:40

“You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you.”

Pharaoh’s statement “you shall be over my house” means that Joseph was given control over Pharaoh’s entire household including all of his advisers.

The statement “according to your command all my people shall do homage” in the original Hebrew text reads “they (the Egyptian people) shall kiss you on your mouth” and is used in a figurative sense meaning that Pharaoh decreed that all of the Egyptian people must obey all Joseph’s commands and prohibitions.

Pharaoh’s statement “only in the throne I will be greater than you” means that only Pharaoh would

possess more authority in the land of Egypt than Joseph.

So we can see that the Lord rewarded Joseph's faith, which was demonstrated by his perseverance and endurance in the midst of undeserved suffering for fourteen years.

God worked out the circumstances so that Pharaoh would promote Joseph as prime minister of Egypt. For example, God gave the cupbearer his dreams and Joseph the ability to interpret those dreams, which led to the cupbearer eventually informing Pharaoh two years later of Joseph's supernatural abilities.

God also gave Pharaoh his dreams and Joseph the ability to interpret those dreams and make recommendations in light of his interpretation of those dreams, which resulted in Pharaoh promoting Joseph. Joseph was rewarded and promoted because he did his work for Potiphar and the prison warden as unto the Lord.

Colossians 3:23-24, "Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve."

Since Joseph was faithful in the little things when serving Potiphar and the prison warden, the Lord rewarded Joseph with greater responsibility.

Matthew 25:21, "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'"

The Lord rewarded Joseph with great authority because he was faithful in more menial responsibilities since those who are faithful in a little thing will be faithful in much.

Luke 16:10, "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much."

The Lord also rewarded Joseph for his humility in that he acknowledged before Pharaoh that God gave him the ability to interpret dreams.

Proverbs 22:4, "The reward of humility and the fear of the LORD are riches, honor and life."

1 Peter 5:5-7

"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."

James 4:10, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you."

The Lord demonstrated his compassion towards Joseph by causing Pharaoh to deliver him from prison and promote him to prime minister of Egypt.

Psalms 135:14, "For the LORD will judge His people and will have compassion on His servants."

Psalms 103:13-14, "Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust."

James 5:11, "We count those blessed who endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Lord's dealings that the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful."

The Lord demonstrated His sovereignty over the nations by causing Pharaoh to promote Joseph to prime minister of Egypt.

Psalms 113:5-8, "Who is like the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people."

1 Samuel 2:7-8, "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of

the earth are the LORD'S, and He set the world on them."

Genesis 41:41-43 records Pharaoh publicly installing Joseph as prime minister of Egypt. In Genesis 41:40-41, Pharaoh makes four statements to Joseph without Joseph answering a word, which reveals Joseph's acknowledgement of the providence of God where God worked out all the events leading to his promotion.

Genesis 41:40

"You shall be over my house, and according to your command all my people shall do homage; only in the throne I will be greater than you."

Genesis 41:41

"Pharaoh said to Joseph, 'See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.'"

Joseph's installation as prime minister of Egypt consisted of a public act of installation, which is recorded in Genesis 41:41-43 and the family act of conferring a new name with elevation to aristocracy by marriage, which is recorded in Genesis 41:44-45.

Pharaoh's first statement "you shall be over my house" means that Joseph was given control over Pharaoh's entire household including all of his advisors.

His second statement "according to your command all my people shall do homage" in the original Hebrew text reads "they (the Egyptian people) shall kiss you on your mouth" and is used in a figurative sense meaning that Pharaoh decreed that all of the Egyptian people must obey all Joseph's commands and prohibitions.

Pharaoh's third statement "only in the throne I will be greater than you" means that only Pharaoh would possess more authority in the land of Egypt than Joseph.

Pharaoh's fourth statement to Joseph "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt" sums up his first three statements revealing that Pharaoh conferred upon Joseph total authority in the task of administrating the nation of Egypt and would only be under Pharaoh's authority. This statement also reflects the Egyptian title "Chief of the Entire

Land," which is a title synonymous with "prime minister."

Beginning in Genesis 41:42, we see Pharaoh performing four ceremonial acts, which publicly establish Joseph as prime minister of Egypt, second in authority only to Pharaoh himself.

Genesis 41:42

"Then Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and clothed him in garments of fine linen and put the gold necklace around his neck."

These four ceremonial acts performed by Pharaoh to establish the delegation of authority to Joseph were well known symbols of investiture in Egypt. This is confirmed in secular history since the account of Ashurbanipal (668-633 B.C.) followed these Egyptian customs when investing Neco as Pharaoh: "I clad him in a garment with multicolored trimmings, placed a golden chain on him...,put golden rings on his hands; I wrote my name (phonetically) upon an iron dagger (to be worn in) the girdle...I presented him with chariots, horses and mules as means of transportation (befitting) his position as ruler" (cited by Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, A Commentary, Zondervan, page 534 from Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Edited by J. B. Pritchard, 3rd Edition, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1969).

The first ceremonial act that publicly established Joseph as prime minister of Egypt was the gift of Pharaoh's signet ring.

"Signet ring" is the noun *tabba`ath* (tu^Bf[^]) (tab-bah-ath), which was the symbol of Pharaoh's authority by which he stamped his signature or emblem on the clay seals that sealed documents, letters, orders and laws.

The gift of the signet ring symbolized the delegation of authority to Joseph and enabled Joseph to validate documents in Pharaoh's name or in other words, with Pharaoh's authority. The imprint of this official ring had the power to make a document and therefore a decree, official, as the one offering the seal has the authority to act on behalf of the one who owns the seal. The gift of the signet ring reflected the title "Royal Seal

Bearer,” which was well known in the Egyptian bureaucracy.

The second ceremonial act performed by Pharaoh to establish Joseph’s authority in Egypt was to dress him in fine linen. In Egypt, those of Pharaoh’s court officials wore expensive top quality garments that were almost transparent, linen and was the same material used in Israel for the Tabernacle furnishings and the priestly garments.

The third ceremonial act performed by Pharaoh to establish Joseph’s authority in Egypt was to put a gold necklace around his neck as a symbol of his authority and high position. The gift of the gold necklace was another well known Egyptian symbol and was one of the highest distinctions Pharaoh could bestow upon one of his subjects.

Genesis 41:43

“He had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed before him, ‘Bow the knee!’ And he set him over all the land of Egypt.”

The fourth and final ceremonial act was to have Joseph ride in Pharaoh’s second chariot with heralds proclaiming “attention” when Joseph drove by. The second chariot indicated that Joseph was second in command to Pharaoh in all the land of Egypt.

“Bow the knee” is the interjection *‘avrekh* (Er@b+a^)(av-rake), which is an Egyptian loanword meaning “attention, make way” and made clear to all the people that an outstanding man of ability, character, and authority was before them who was in complete control of affairs that meant life or death to multitudes.

It was customary in the ancient world and in the early days of the Israelite monarchy to have runners preceding the chariot of a dignitary heralding his arrival (See Esther 6:9; 2 Samuel 15:1; 1 Kings 1:5).

This last step in Joseph’s elevation to power served to introduce Joseph to the people of Egypt to whom he was totally unknown since for the previous fourteen years he was a household servant and prisoner.

Joseph’s elevation to power as a result of God giving him the ability to interpret Pharaoh’s

dreams and to formulate a plan in light of this interpretation reveals the spiritual principle recorded in Proverbs 21:1.

Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

Next, we will note Joseph becoming a part of Egyptian aristocracy by Pharaoh giving him in marriage, Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On as well as bestowing him with a new name and this all recorded in Genesis 41:44-45.

Genesis 41:44

“Moreover, Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.’”

The statement “I am Pharaoh” means that Pharaoh is speaking with the full authority of his royal office.

The expression “no one shall raise his hand or foot” is a figure of speech meaning that no one in Egypt will be able to take any significant action without Joseph’s permission and means that Pharaoh has conferred upon Joseph the powers of a dictator.

Pharaoh’s statement to Joseph, “Though I am Pharaoh, yet without your permission no one shall raise his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt” meant that Joseph could do as he pleased and was accountable to only Pharaoh himself.

Although the mandate was probably confined to the matter of the economy of the country in view of the coming famine, Joseph would have had enough power to get back at the people who harmed him. This mandate meant that Joseph had risen above Potiphar and could have sought revenge against Potiphar’s wife but yet Joseph did not do this.

Notice that Joseph never exploited his newly obtained power and authority to exact revenge on Potiphar’s wife or brothers for their unjust treatment of him. Even in the encounter with his brothers, about which we will read later in the book of Genesis, there is no hint of revenge, just a prudent investigation into their character before revealing his identity to them.

The fact that Joseph never exploited his newly obtained power and authority to exact revenge on Potiphar's wife or brothers for their unjust treatment of him reveals that he lived according to the command taught by Paul to the Romans, to never seek their own revenge.

Romans 12:17-21

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men."

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

"Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,' says the Lord."

"BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD."

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

The fact that Joseph never exploited his newly obtained power and authority to exact revenge on Potiphar's wife or brothers for their unjust treatment of him reveals that he forgave them.

Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Joseph was a very young man for the high position he occupied and it would have been easy for him to be corrupted by the power he possessed. However, the fourteen years of undeserved suffering as a household slave and being imprisoned unjustly as a result of the accusations by Potiphar's wife against Joseph had humbled Joseph and taught him that the Lord is in control of history and his circumstances and that he was accountable to God.

Power did not corrupt Joseph because he acknowledged that he was accountable to God.

Romans 14:12, "So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God."

Genesis 41:45

"Then Pharaoh named Joseph Zaphenath-paneah; and he gave him Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, as his wife. And Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt."

Up to this point, Joseph has everything except the requisite social standing in Egyptian society so as to have the respect of the people and in order to meet this requirement Pharaoh gives Joseph an Egyptian name and wife.

"Zaphenath-paneah" is the proper noun *tsaph^enath pa^oneach* (jn@u+P^ tn^p+x*) (tsaf-nath pah-nay-akh), the meaning of which is uncertain.

Some exegetes connect this name with Joseph's ability to interpret dreams, considering in the first element a derivation from the Hebrew stem *tsaphan* (/p^x*) (tsaw-fan), "to hide" and rendering the second, contextually "to elucidate." Therefore, the name "Zaphenath-paneah" would mean "revealer of hidden things."

However, this name has an Egyptian origin rather than a Hebrew one and is widely held among Egyptologists that the word is derived from an Egyptian word meaning "God has spoken and he (Pharaoh and Egypt) shall live." Yet, some disagree with this meaning citing that such a name was given at the birth of a child rather than later in life to an adult such as Joseph and have suggested that the name means, "the man he knows."

The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament) transcribed it with a Greek word (*psonthomphanech*), which appears to represent a Late Egyptian word (*psontenpa`anh*), which means, "the creator/sustainer of life." This would be an appropriate name for Joseph's new position as prime minister in which he would provide for the nation of Egypt during the seven years of famine.

There seems to be more evidence leaning toward the meaning being "God has spoken and he (Pharaoh and Egypt) shall live" since it is Egyptian in origin and it fits the context in which God spoke through Joseph to Pharaoh and as a result Pharaoh and Egypt will not be destroyed by the coming famine. What the name means is not important but what is important was that he was given an Egyptian name, which represented his

Egyptian citizenship and acceptance into Egyptian society.

Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name to naturalize Joseph or in other words, it gave him Egyptian citizenship, which he needed so as to exercise his new authority and power given to him by Pharaoh. The new name symbolizes Joseph's new identity and new, fresh start in life in Egyptian society and validates his new position as prime minister of Egypt and also signifies Pharaoh's greater authority since only he has the power to give Joseph an Egyptian name.

Joseph would no longer be an Asiatic slave, nor would he be considered a member of the Hebrews, which were despised by the Egyptians according to Genesis 43:32 and 46:34, but rather he would now be considered a member of Egyptian aristocracy.

Not only does Joseph get a new name but also a new bride, which would further solidify Joseph's social status in Egypt. Her name was "Asenath," which is the proper noun *asnath* (tn[^]s+a*) (aw-se-nath) and literally means, "the servant of the goddess Neith" and whose father's name was "Potiphera," which is the proper noun *poti phera* (ur[^]p# yf!w)P (po-tee-feh-rah), and means, "he whom Ra (the sun-god) has given."

"Potiphera" was a priest of the sun god Ra at "On," which was situated seven miles northwest of modern Cairo and was a famous place for the worship of the sun-god Ra, thus it was called by the Greeks, "Heliopolis," which means, "sun-city."

The name of the city of "On" means "column," which reflects the city's most outstanding architectural features, which were columns and colonnades (Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary*, page 288, Jewish Publication Society).

The high priest at On held the exalted title in Egypt "Greatest of Seers," thus Joseph is marrying into the elite of Egyptian nobility (Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary*, page 288, Jewish Publication Society).

The fact that Joseph marries an Egyptian woman leads us to the question as to whether or not Joseph was wrong to do so. Remember, Joseph's family could not go to Laban to get wives and

Joseph could not go back to his family and get a bride so God provided one for Joseph among the Egyptians. The Israelites such as Joseph were prohibited from marrying Canaanite women unless of course, they accepted Jesus Christ as their God and Savior as Rahab and Tamar did. The Egyptians were not descendants of Ham's son, Canaan but rather of his son Mizraim and thus they were not Canaanites.

In Joseph's day, God had not yet given any commandments regarding marriage, but later in the Mosaic Law, God did "not" forbid a marriage to Gentiles (See Deuteronomy 21:10-13) but only a specific group of Gentiles, the Canaanites (See Genesis 9:24-27; Deuteronomy 20:17-18). Therefore, we must conclude that Joseph did not sin by taking this Egyptian woman to be his wife and the fact that she was the daughter of an Egyptian priest does not necessarily indicate otherwise.

I doubt very much that Pharaoh would have given Joseph a wife who would have been an offense to him. Furthermore Joseph never would have taken her as his wife if she would have been a detriment to his spiritual life since if he could say "no" to Potiphar's wife because of his love for the Lord, then he would surely have declined Potiphera's daughter if she would hinder his walk with the Lord.

The fact that the Holy Spirit saw fit to have Moses' record the name of Joseph's Egyptian wife also implies that she accepted by faith the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph unlike Judah's first wife whose name was not recorded except in 1 Chronicles 2:3 and for only historical purposes.

The statement "Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt" refers to Joseph's initial tour of inspection of the land of Egypt in order to acquire firsthand information that would enable him to execute his plan.

Joseph wasted no time in familiarizing himself with the conditions in the various cities in Egypt in preparation for his awesome responsibility of preparing the Egyptians for the coming famine. He needed firsthand information of the resources Egypt possessed and the people, which could only be acquired by a survey region by region.

Genesis 41:46-49 presents to us the record of Joseph's wise administration during the seven years of prosperity.

Genesis 41:46

“Now Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh and went through all the land of Egypt.”

Genesis 41:46 records Joseph embarking upon the third and final journey of his life since his life is divided into three segments: (1) Birth to Seventeen Years of Age (Genesis 30:24-37:2) (2) Seventeen to Thirty Years of Age (Genesis 37:2-41:46) (3) Thirty Years to Death (Genesis 41:46-50:26).

The fact that Joseph was thirty-years of age when he became prime minister of Egypt and was seventeen years of age when he was sold into slavery by his brothers according to Genesis 37:2 indicates that he spent fourteen years in servitude if we count his seventeenth year.

The expression “when he (Joseph) stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt” refers to the fact that Joseph was serving the king of Egypt and possessed the honor of being on intimate terms with Pharaoh and having his confidence and being a favorite of his.

The statement “Joseph...went through all the land of Egypt” refers to the extensive journeys that followed after the initial tours of inspection and exploration that are denoted in Genesis 41:45 by the statement “Joseph went forth over the land of Egypt.”

During these journeys, Joseph inspected the various cities in Egypt, acquiring firsthand information about resources of the land as well as familiarizing himself with the people in order to prepare for the coming famine.

Also, during these trips, he would delegate authority to civil administrators in each city in Egypt who would be subordinate to him and would help him execute his plan that he presented to Pharaoh, which is recorded in Genesis 41:33-37.

Joseph along with his subordinates in each city would conduct a detailed survey of the agriculture and the infrastructure of each city and would

accordingly organize a comprehensive plan to set aside reserves during the seven years of prosperity.

Genesis 41:47-57 records the fulfillment of the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams by Joseph as well as the execution of the plan that Joseph proposed to Pharaoh in light of his interpretation.

Gordon J. Wenham makes insightful comment regarding Genesis 41:47-57, he writes, “Repetition serves to underline the frenetic pace of Joseph's activity, while the relative brevity of the description of the seven years of plenty compared with that of the famine help to create the impression of time flying by in Joseph's life” (Word Biblical Commentary, volume 2, Genesis 16-50, page 397, Nelson Reference and Electronic).

The seven years of plenty meant that the land of Egypt produced extraordinary bumper crops of wheat, excellent harvests for the next seven years, which was in fulfillment of Joseph's prophecy recorded in Genesis 41:26 and 29.

Genesis 41:47

“During the seven years of plenty the land brought forth abundantly.”

In the Hebrew text, “abundantly” is composed of three words: (1) Noun *sava* (ub*c*) (saw-vaw), which means, “a surplus,” denoting the possession of ample and sufficient food production (2) Preposition *l*^e (l+) (lamed), “by” (3) Masculine plural noun *qomets* (Jm#q) (komets), which means, “handfuls.”

The noun *sava* means, “a surplus” in the sense that the land of Egypt produced seven years of ample and sufficient supply of wheat.

Egypt was famous in the ancient world for its wheat and was known as the granary of the ancient world.

The noun *qomets* is in the plural and means, “handfuls, bundles” and is used in a figurative sense in Genesis 41:47 to mean uncountable numbers.

The preposition *l*^e denotes the “means” by which the land of Egypt during the seven years of abundance produced a surplus, namely, “by the

handfuls or by the bundles” presenting an image of the grain filling the hand.

Genesis 41:48

“So he gathered all the food of these seven years which occurred in the land of Egypt and placed the food in the cities; he placed in every city the food from its own surrounding fields.”

Genesis 41:49

“Thus Joseph stored up grain in great abundance like the sand of the sea, until he stopped measuring it, for it was beyond measure.”

A comparison of Genesis 41:33-37 with Genesis 41:47-49 reveals that during these seven abundant years Joseph gathered all the food and stored it in the cities of Egypt while at the same time exacted a fifth of the produce of the land and kept it in reserve in the various cities of Egypt where it would be guarded. The fact that Joseph stuck to his plan and took one fifth of the produce of each of the seven years of prosperity demonstrates his great discipline and integrity and would have also taken great diplomacy and persuasion to execute.

Henry M. Morris has an excellent comment, he writes, “It would be necessary to levy a ‘double tithe’ on the produce of Egypt during the years of plenty. It has been shown by historians that tithing was practiced in ancient Egypt and other nations, as a form of taxes or tribute to the king; but a 20 percent levy would be very unusual and might well be resisted, especially if enacted by an unpopular sovereign. Thus, the chief administrator of his plan would have to be skilled in diplomacy and persuasion, as well as be of unquestioned integrity himself, in order to overcome the natural reluctance of the people to such a tax. Of course, resistance would be minimized in times of prosperity” (The Genesis Record, Baker Book House, page 584).

During these seven years, the wheat harvests were so great and extraordinary the grain was piled up like the sand of the sea so that Joseph had to actually stop counting at one point because there was no number in the Egyptian language to allow him to count further! In fact, later in history, the Greeks had no number greater than ten thousand,

which was true of the Egyptians as indicated by the statement that Joseph had to stop counting.

Joseph’s activities make it clear that he held the well-known Egyptian office of “Overseer of the Granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt.” The duties of this office involved the collection of tax payments on field produce (See Genesis 47:24) as well as the storage of the grain of bumper crops for distribution in years of famine.

The plan that Joseph proposed to Pharaoh in Genesis 41:33-37 and which we see him executing in Genesis 41:47-49 was given to him by God and the execution of this plan was a manifestation of the wisdom of God in the life of Joseph.

Genesis 39:16,, “Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!”

“Wisdom” is an attribute of God that is found in the Person of Christ and expressed in the Word of Christ, and is revelation from God, which is revealed by the Holy Spirit in the pages of Scripture.

Colossians 2:3, “in whom (Christ) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

The wisdom of God is expressed through creation.

Psalms 104:24, “O LORD, how many are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all.”

The wisdom of God is expressed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which presents God’s provision of eternal salvation for the entire human race through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (See 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:16).

The believer acquires the wisdom of God by letting the Word of Christ richly dwell in his soul, which gives him the capacity to glorify God in whatever circumstance or relationship in life.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

James describes God’s wisdom.

James 3:17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

The attainment of the wisdom of the Lord is superior to the acquiring of temporal wealth.

Proverbs 3:13-18

“How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding.”

“For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold.”

“She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her.”

“Long life is in her right hand; In her left hand are riches and honor.”

“Her ways are pleasant ways and all her paths are peace.”

“She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who hold her fast.”

Since wisdom is revelation from God, Pharaoh’s dreams and Joseph’s interpretation of those dreams and his plan were revelation from God as well and were therefore a manifestation of the wisdom of God. God’s wisdom is based upon His omniscience and is His unique ability to devise a perfect plan to accomplish His goal to glorify Himself and so Joseph’s plan that was given to him by God was designed to glorify God and thus by executing this plan, Joseph was glorifying God.

To “glorify” God is to manifest an aspect of God’s character through our words or actions and so Joseph’s interpretation and plan glorified God in the sense that it manifested the omniscience, the sovereignty and the love of God.

The “omniscience” of God was manifested in Joseph’s interpretation and plan in that they revealed what was unknown to Pharaoh and all men, namely, seven years of prosperity and seven years of famine.

The “sovereignty” of God was manifested in Joseph’s interpretation and plan in that they revealed to Pharaoh the complete power over all of creation that Joseph’s God exercised absolutely.

The “love” of God was manifested in Joseph’s interpretation and plan in that they revealed God’s care and concern for not only Joseph’s family but also for the Egyptians and all men.

Therefore, we see God using Joseph as His instrument to manifest His wisdom to men and to glorify Himself before men.

Next, we come to Genesis 41:50-52, which records the birth of Joseph’s sons who he named “Manasseh” and “Ephraim.”

Genesis 41:50

“Now before the year of famine came, two sons were born to Joseph, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara priest of On, bore to him.”

The account of the birth of Joseph’s sons forms the pivot in the story of Joseph’s wise administration during the seven years of abundant harvests and the seven years of famine, which are recorded in Genesis 41:53-57. It is pivotal since it shows how and when these two progenitors or fathers of future tribes in Israel came into existence and also to reveal Joseph’s viewpoint towards the gift of these two sons.

The name of their mother is recorded again demonstrating that Joseph was monogamous like his grandfather Isaac but unlike his great grandfather Abraham and his father Israel, both of whom had concubines.

The birth of Joseph’s sons took place before the years of famine and thus during the seven years of abundance.

In the prepositional phrase “before the year of famine” that appears in Genesis 41:50, the word for “famine” in the Hebrew is in the singular to designate the seven years of famine as a single unit.

Joseph’s sons were a gift from the Lord.

Psalms 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

The birth of children and good crops were marks of divine blessing in the Old Testament.

Deuteronomy 28:4, “Blessed shall be the offspring of your body and the produce of your

ground and the offspring of your beasts, the increase of your herd and the young of your flock.”

“Asenath” is the proper noun *asnath* (tn[^]s+a*) (aw-se-nath) and literally means, “the servant of the goddess Neith” and whose father’s name was “Potiphera,” which is the proper noun *poti phera* (ur[^]p# yf!w)P) (po-tee-feh-rah), and means, “he whom Ra (the sun-god) has given.”

The fact that Joseph marries an Egyptian woman was not against the will of God. Remember, Joseph’s family could not go to Laban to get wives and Joseph could not go back to his family and get a bride so God provided one for Joseph among the Egyptians.

The Israelites such as Joseph were prohibited from marrying Canaanite women unless of course, they accepted Jesus Christ as their God and Savior as Rahab and Tamar did. The Egyptians were not descendants of Ham’s son, Canaan but rather of his son Mizraim and thus they were not Canaanites.

In Joseph’s day, God had not yet given any commandments regarding marriage, but later in the Mosaic Law, God did “not” forbid a marriage to Gentiles (See Deuteronomy 21:10-13) but only a specific group of Gentiles, the Canaanites (See Genesis 9:24-27; Deuteronomy 20:17-18). Therefore, we must conclude that Joseph did not sin by taking this Egyptian woman to be his wife and the fact that she was the daughter of an Egyptian priest does not necessarily indicate otherwise.

I doubt very much that Pharaoh would have given Joseph a wife who would have been an offense to him. Furthermore Joseph never would have taken her as his wife if she would have been a detriment to his spiritual life since if he could say “no” to Potiphar’s wife because of his love for the Lord, then he would surely have declined Potiphera’s daughter if she would hinder his walk with the Lord.

The fact that the Holy Spirit saw fit to have Moses’ record the name of Joseph’s Egyptian wife also implies that she accepted by faith the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph unlike Judah’s

first wife whose name was not recorded except in 1 Chronicles 2:3 and for only historical purposes.

Asenath’s father was “Potiphera” who was a priest of the sun god Ra at “On,” which was situated seven miles northwest of modern Cairo and was a famous place for the worship of the sun-god Ra, thus it was called by the Greeks, “Heliopolis,” which means, “sun-city.”

Genesis 41:51

“Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.’”

The names of both of Joseph’s sons praise and thank God, first for His preservation and for His blessing. Praising and thanking God is the “recognition” and “response” in the believer’s soul, which expresses itself in love and appreciation for who and what God is and what He has done for the believer through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and for other believers.

Psalm 100:4-5, “Enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. For the LORD is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting and His faithfulness to all generations.”

By these names, Joseph was also giving testimony to his faith in the Lord’s promises and for His faithfulness.

Psalm 91:2, “I will say to the LORD, ‘My refuge and my fortress, My God, in whom I trust!’”

Lamentations 3:22-23, “The LORD’S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.”

These names also reveal that Joseph understood that God had permitted him to suffer undeservedly for fourteen years in order to train him. They also acknowledged that the Lord was indeed with him.

Also, the names of his children are not Egyptian but rather Hebrew in origin indicating he has not forgotten his family in Canaan and that he was maintaining his covenant relationship with the God of his father, Israel.

Joseph’s firstborn was “Manasseh” (*m^enashsheh*) (hv#n[^]m+) (men-ash-sheh) whose name means,

“He who causes to forget” as indicated by Joseph’s statement “For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.”

The name “Manasseh” is derived from the verb *nashah* (נשח) (naw-shaw), which means, “to forget” and appears also in Genesis 41:51 and is translated “forget.”

The verb *nashah*, “forget” does “not” mean the loss of memory of his adversities related to his brothers selling him into slavery but rather it means the hurt or the sting has gone out of the memory since God has blessed him greatly in Egypt. In fact, the mere mention of his father’s household reveals that Joseph has not forgotten his father or brothers.

The phrase “all my trouble and all my father’s household” is a “hendiadys” meaning that even though there are two different expressions one idea is intended, thus it can be translated “all my trouble associated with my father’s household.”

The name of Joseph’s firstborn praises God for delivering him from all the adversities and heartbreak inflicted upon him by his brothers for selling him into slavery in Canaan.

The name “Manasseh” signifies that God had healed Joseph of the bitter memories of being sold into slavery by his brothers by blessing Joseph while in Egypt. This name indicates that God had healed him of the bitterness caused by his brother’s mistreatment of him and that he had forgiven them as a result of the Lord blessing him in Egypt.

Job 5:18, “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Psalm 147:3, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

Later on Manasseh would be adopted by his grandfather Jacob along with his brother Ephraim according to Genesis 48:5. This act elevated these two boys of Joseph to the status of their uncles and father.

The elevation of grandchildren to the status of children is an ancient Near Eastern practice, which is primarily used in the context of inheritance. Thus, the descendants of Manasseh regarded him as their patriarch.

This partitioning of Joseph’s line is tantamount to declaring him to hold the status of the firstborn, as not only did he receive a share of his father’s estate upon Jacob’s death, but also these sons each received a share of Jacob’s inheritance.

The tribe that descended from Manasseh eventually settled in the heartland of what would become the northern kingdom of Israel. Its territory west of the Jordan extended from the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley to the Wadi Qanah.

The Trans-jordanian region stretched between, and at times, beyond the area between the Yarmuk and the Jabbok rivers. Manasseh possessed the most significant east-west road connecting the Via Maris with the Trans-jordanian King’s Highway, following the Wadi Farah to the Jordan River ford at Adam, then following the Jabbok Valley to where it intersected the King’s Highway. The desire to control this route partially explains the expansion of this tribe into the Trans-jordan, which was paved by the Romans centuries later.

Genesis 41:52

“He named the second Ephraim, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.’”

The second son that Asenath bore to Joseph was named “Ephraim” (*ephrayim*) (<y!r^p+a#) (ef-rah-yim) whose name means, “He has made me fruitful,” as indicated by Joseph’s statement “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

The name “Ephraim” is derived from the verb *parah* (פרא) (paw-raw), which means, “to be fruitful” and appears also in Genesis 41:52 and is translated “has made me fruitful.”

The verb *parah* refers to abundant posterity (See Genesis 17:6, 20; 28:3; 48:4; Psalm 105:23-24), which is unusual that it should be used by Joseph after the birth of only his second child. Therefore, we can see that the verb *parah* along with the proper noun *ephrayim*, “Ephraim” forms a prophecy related to the tribe that would descend from Joseph’s second son Ephraim.

In fact, Moses in his farewell address recorded in Deuteronomy 33:13-17 bestows a fertility blessing

upon Joseph and explicitly refers to the “ten thousands of Ephraim” and the “thousands of Manasseh.”

Before Jacob died, Joseph presented his older son Manasseh next to Jacob’s right hand, but Jacob crossed his arms to Jacob’s right hand in blessing on the head of Ephraim as a prediction that the tribe of Ephraim would have the leadership. However, Jacob’s final blessing was on Joseph without distinguishing between Ephraim and Manasseh (See Genesis 49:22-26).

When the land of Canaan was divided among the tribes of Israel under Joshua, Ephraim was given territory in the central part of the promised land extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea with the territory of the western half of Manasseh to the north and the territories of Benjamin and Dan to the south (See Joshua 16:5-8).

Most of the territory was hill country and the Old Testament speaks of the hill country of Ephraim 31 times and was very fertile and had more rainfall than Judah to the south, so it was fruitful.

“The land of my affliction” refers to Joseph’s experiences of suffering bondage in Egypt, which anticipates that of his descendants (See Exodus 3:7; 17; 4:31; Deuteronomy 26:7).

Manasseh and Ephraim would be the progenitors of two tribes in Israel that would bear their names. They were a gift from the Lord to Joseph and brought him joy and happiness and help take the sting out of the bitter memories of being sold into slavery by his brothers. The birth of these boys also caused Joseph to worship the Lord by giving thanks and praise for His faithfulness to him while suffering undeservedly in Egypt.

Since Joseph persevered through fourteen years of undeserved suffering, the Lord rewarded him by promoting him to prime minister, giving him a wife and two sons. This reminds us that we too as church age believers will be rewarded by the Lord at the Bema Seat if we persevere.

James 1:12, “Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.”

It also encourages us to not grow weary since in due time we will reap rewards.

Galatians 6:9, “Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.”

We will complete our study of Genesis 41 by noting Genesis 41:53-57 and read of Joseph’s wise administration during the seven years of famine.

Genesis 41:53-54

“When the seven years of plenty which had been in the land of Egypt came to an end, and the seven years of famine began to come, just as Joseph had said, then there was famine in all the lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.”

Genesis 41:53-57 records that not only did famine hit Egypt but also the countries surrounding it as well as the entire earth.

The five-fold repetition of the word “famine” and the word “severe” appearing twice emphasizes the seriousness and the magnitude of this famine.

The physical causes that God used to bring about the famine are not recorded. However, Egyptian and other Ancient Near Eastern documents reveal that drought in Egypt came about due to the Nile running low because of droughts in the highlands so that the annual inundations, which irrigated the productive areas of Egypt no longer, took place. In fact, seven year famines were not uncommon in the ancient Near East and are well documented in Egyptian and Near Eastern texts.

The Egyptian economy and agriculture was totally dependent upon the flooding of the Nile River caused by the river’s periodic rise during three summer months. Inadequate rainfall in the southern Sudan would prevent the Nile from flooding during its usual three months in northern Egypt and without this annual flood, famine would occur.

The swelling of the Nile results from torrential rains in the Upper Nile Basin, which are carried down to the Delta by the Blue Nile. In ancient times a complex series of artificially constructed irrigation works controlled the distribution and utilization of the flood waters. The floods would usually come with great regularity, but there were

years when the rainfall in the southern Sudan provided an insufficient amount of water. If there was rainfall of just a few inches, this would result in no irrigation to the arid areas of the north and would deprive the arable land of its productivity, which resulted in famine.

The fact that the seven years of extraordinary bumper crops was followed by seven years of famine was according to Joseph's prediction recorded in Genesis 41:25-32 demonstrating that his interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams was inspired by God.

The seven years of prosperity followed by seven years of severe famine upon the land of Egypt were a part of God's plan and sovereign will from eternity past. This is indicated in Genesis 41:32 with the statement "the matter (seven years of bumper crops followed by seven years of famine) is determined by God, and God will quickly bring it about."

This divine plan is called in theology, the "divine decree," which is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future. The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable will and so these seven years of famine and prosperity was part of God's plan from eternity past.

God used the famine as the means to have Pharaoh promote Joseph to prime minister and to relocate Joseph's family from Canaan to Egypt in order to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence. The famine would cause Joseph's family to go down to Egypt to buy food and this would result in Joseph's brothers bowing down to him in fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Genesis 41:54 also records that "there was famine in all the lands," which is a reference to the countries that surrounded Egypt and of these countries would be Canaan where Joseph's family resided.

The famine in Canaan was not due to the lack of rainfall in the southern Sudan resulting in the flooding of the Nile but rather due to the lack of rainfall in Palestine and Syria. So there was no

natural connection between the famine in Egypt and that in Canaan since the two had entirely unrelated causes.

Genesis 41:55

"So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried out to Pharaoh for bread; and Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, 'Go to Joseph; whatever he says to you, you shall do.'"

"Cried out" is the verb *tsa`aq* (qu^x*) (tsaw-ak), which means, "to cry out for help" and expresses extreme urgent need for food among the citizens of Egypt and expresses their desire that Pharaoh intervene and provide them with food.

The initial reaction to the famine by the Egyptians was to complain to Pharaoh. They reasoned that it was the government's responsibility to provide for them as if Pharaoh was God and could control the flow of water in the Nile! In this case, the government was prepared for the famine and could in fact help its citizens thanks to God working through Joseph who held the office of "Overseer of the Granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt." The duties of this office involved the collection of tax payments on field produce (See Genesis 47:24) as well as the storage of the grain of bumper crops for distribution in years of famine.

Pharaoh demonstrates his total and complete confidence in Joseph's administrative abilities in that he directs all of the citizens of Egypt to go to Joseph and obey whatever he commands them to do. This verse also anticipates the next episode and explains why Joseph's brothers had to appear in person before Joseph.

Genesis 41:56

"When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians; and the famine was severe in the land of Egypt."

A comparison of Genesis 41:33-37 with Genesis 41:47-49 reveals that during the seven abundant years Joseph and the civil administrators he appointed in the various cities of Egypt gathered all the food and stored it in the cities of Egypt.

During this time he also exacted a fifth of the produce of the land and kept it in reserve in the various cities of Egypt where it would be guarded.

Here we see Joseph beginning to open the storehouses in the various cities that were held in reserve in anticipation of the famine.

The statement “When the famine was spread over all the face of the earth, then Joseph opened all the storehouses” reveals that Joseph waited until the famine was all over the earth before he opened upon the storehouses of grain.

He waited until the last possible moment in order to better conserve the grain that was available. Joseph sells the grain to people rather than just giving it away since this would enable him to maintain strict control over the supplies in order to prevent looting, waste and corruption. He knew that these vast reserves of grain that had been accumulating during the seven year of bumper crops would have to be carefully maintained to last throughout the seven years of famine. It would have been irresponsible, unwise and shortsighted of Joseph if he had simply given away the grain rather than sell it.

Also, 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 the grain away would have meant bankrupting the government and thus destroying it. Therefore, Joseph sold to those who could afford to purchase grain and it is reasonable to assume that he did not charge those who were unable to buy. Or, more than likely he employed these individuals for government service in order to earn the necessary cash or credit to purchase grain.

Genesis 41:57

“The people of all the earth came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe in all the earth.”

The entire earth was affected by famine and not only Egypt as indicated by the statement “the famine was severe in all the earth.”

When news reached the various nations that Egypt had grain in vast reserves, these nations would send caravans and missions down to Egypt to buy grain. This would lead to Joseph’s father Jacob sending his sons down to Egypt as well to purchase grain since the famine was severe in Canaan as well.

Ultimately, this was the reason why God brought a famine upon the entire earth and put Joseph in Egypt to administrate during the famine. God wanted Jacob’s family in Egypt to protect it from the Canaanite influence and the famine was the means by which God accomplished this.

Twenty percent of the produce during the seven years of bumper crops was sufficient to meet all the needs of not only the Egyptians but also for all the nations of the earth during the seven years of famine. The population survived on only one-fourth of what had been available during the seven years of prosperity. This testifies to both the overwhelming abundance that God provided during the first seven years and also to the exceptional efficiency of Joseph’s management of the reserves of grain during the last seven years. It also demonstrates that people can get by with far less than they are accustomed to during good times.

Remember God graciously provides for our “needs” or in other words that which is necessary to sustain life but does not always provides for our “desires” or “wants” (See Philippians 4:19). Therefore, we can see that God used Joseph’s wise administration during the seven years of bumper crops and the seven years famine to not only deliver Egypt from disaster and his family but also all the nations of the earth.

The fact that Joseph who was a descendant of Abraham brought blessing to the entire world through his wise administration was another manifestation of the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham that through him and his descendants all the families of the earth would be blessed (See Genesis 12:3).

Notice that Joseph never takes advantage of his privileges, his authority or financial resources or exploit anybody or the famine for personal gain. Joseph had the capacity to wisely administrate the entire nation of Egypt during this crisis at only the age of thirty because God put him through an intensive and experience oriented course in management under Potiphar and while in prison.

God prepared him for leadership and this awesome responsibility as prime minister of Egypt during the fourteen years of servitude and the three years of imprisonment under Potiphar. Joseph learned

from each experience under Potiphar and passed each test that God gave him and by doing so he learned to trust God even more. By the time the Lord opened the door for him and promoted him, Joseph was ready to handle the power and prestige without falling victim to pride.

Genesis 42

Genesis 42 begins the “third act” of the tenth and final section in the book of Genesis. This tenth section in the book of Genesis is contained Genesis 37:2-50:26 and gives us the account of Jacob’s descendants.

The first act was contained in Genesis 37:2-38:30, introducing us to the dysfunctional family of Jacob (37:2-38:30), giving us the account of Joseph being rejected by his brothers and sold into slavery (37:2-36) as well as containing the story of Judah sinning against Tamar and having twins with her (38:1-30).

The second act was contained in Genesis 39:1-41:57 presenting Joseph’s rise to power over Egypt, giving us the account of Joseph in Potiphar’s house (39:1-20), being imprisoned and interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh’s cupbearer and baker (39:21-40:23) as well as being promoted by Pharaoh to prime minister (41:1-57).

The third act is contained in Genesis 42:1 to Genesis 46:27, giving us the account of the dysfunctional family of Jacob being reconciled in Egypt and contains four scenes.

The first scene recorded in Genesis 42 presents Joseph’s brothers with the exception of Benjamin making their first journey to Egypt to buy grain. During this trip Joseph imprisons Simeon, promising his release upon their second journey with Benjamin with them. However, Joseph plants money in their sacks and then gives his brothers a choice of either returning the money, guaranteeing Simeon’s release or of keeping it and thus jeopardizing his freedom.

Genesis 43 contains the second scene where Joseph’s steward returns Simeon to his brothers as soon as, but only after they return the money to him. At the end of this scene, Joseph tests his brothers by giving Benjamin preferential treatment and without envy the brothers joyously drink together.

Genesis 44:1-14 contains the third scene where Joseph put his brothers to their final test of love for their brother in need by making Benjamin alone appear guilty of secretly placing his silver cup in his sack and counseling the other brothers to return home in peace. But then, in Genesis 44:15-34, Judah offers himself as a slave in Benjamin’s place, which causes Joseph to reveal his identity to his brothers since they have demonstrated to him that he can trust them completely and this is recorded in Genesis 45:1-15. People who sell their brother into slavery are not trustworthy and so therefore Joseph retained power over his brothers until he could trust them.

In the fourth and final scene that is recorded in Genesis 45:16-24 we see Jacob’s entire family migrating toward Egypt to live with Joseph.

Beginning in Genesis 42, we see the providence of God at work in bringing about a reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers as well as relocating Joseph’s family to Egypt in order to protect it from the Canaanite influence. The means by which God brought about this reconciliation and relocation of Jacob’s family to Egypt was the famine that wracked Canaan, Egypt and the entire earth causing Jacob to send his sons to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph works with this providence to unite his brothers and demonstrates that he not only is the leader of Egypt but also of his family, leading his brothers to repentance and reconciliation.

In the third act that is contained in Genesis 42:1-46:27, we see the spiritual transformation of Joseph’s brothers with Joseph and Judah emerging as heroes. In this act, we see Joseph’s brothers rallying around Benjamin whereas years before they had conspired to kill Joseph. Also, in this act, we see Joseph’s brothers demonstrating compassion towards their father whereas years before they demonstrated none when breaking the news of Joseph. Judah emerges as the family leader in this act, which is demonstrated in his willingness to become Joseph’s slave instead of Benjamin.

Lastly, we see Joseph forgiving his brothers for their actions against him in the past.

This first scene that appears in Genesis 42 consists of three sections: (1) Jacob sends his sons to Egypt (42:1-5). (2) Joseph’s brothers have two audiences

with him (42:6-26). (3) Joseph's brothers return to Jacob in Canaan (42:27-38).

Genesis 42:1-5 presents to us the record of Jacob sending his sons to Egypt to buy grain in order to deal with the problem of the famine in Canaan. As we studied in Genesis 41:53-57, there was not only a famine in Egypt but also in the countries surrounding Egypt and the entire earth, thus Canaan where Jacob's family lived was a victim of famine.

Genesis 42:1

“Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, ‘Why are you staring at one another?’”

Genesis 42:2

“He said, ‘Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die.’”

Genesis 42:3

“Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt.”

Genesis 42:4

“But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, ‘I am afraid that harm may befall him.’”

Genesis 42:5

“So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.”

At this point in the narrative Jacob is approximately 130 years of age while Joseph was 39. This is indicated by the following: Genesis 37:2 records Joseph as 17 years old when he was sold into slavery and Genesis 41:46 records Joseph as 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt. Therefore, a comparison of Genesis 37:2 with 41:46 indicates that Joseph was incarcerated in Egypt for 13 years and 14 if we count his 17th year.

Also, at the end of the seven years of prosperity in Egypt, Joseph must have been 37 years of age since he became prime minister at 30 years of age when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream.

In Genesis 45:6, after reuniting with his brothers, Joseph mentions to his brothers that two years of famine had already transpired and that five more remained. Right after this conversation that Joseph had with his brothers, Jacob moved to Egypt and reunited with Joseph according to Genesis 46. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was 37 after the seven years of prosperity and that he met his father after two years of famine indicates that Joseph was 39 years of age (or 40 if we count his 17th year) when he was reunited with his father Jacob and his brothers during the seven years of famine.

So if Joseph was 39 years of age when he was reunited with his father Jacob and became prime minister at 30 and was sold into slavery at 17, then Joseph was in Egypt for 22 years when he was reunited with his father Jacob.

During Joseph's time as prime minister it appears that he did not attempt to contact his brothers because he remembered how they hated him for the dreams and for his long sleeved multicolored tunic as well as the content of his dreams. He must have wondered to himself how much more jealous they would be if they saw him in his position as prime minister with a gold chain around his neck and Pharaoh's signet ring on his finger. He knew if they were still jealous he could not have fellowship with them and they might not accept his help. He apparently kept these things in mind and was ready to deal with them when they arrived in Egypt to buy grain and then, the time came when they needed his help.

Genesis 42:1

“Now Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, and Jacob said to his sons, ‘Why are you staring at one another?’”

Genesis 42:2

“He said, ‘Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die.’”

Canaan experienced famine quite often since there was one in this land in the time of Abraham (See Genesis 12:10), there was one in the days of Isaac (See Genesis 26:1) and now a third in the time of Jacob. In fact, Stephen alludes to this famine in the days of Jacob in Acts 7:11, stating that there was

great affliction, and the patriarchs found no sustenance. The faith of each one of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was tested by famine.

Jacob demonstrates that he is still actively leading his family by his decisiveness and taking the initiative in dealing with the famine in Canaan and ordering his sons to go to Egypt to buy grain whereas in marked contrast, his sons demonstrate their indecisiveness.

The indecisiveness of Jacob's sons is manifested in that Jacob says to them, "why are you staring at one another?"

"Why are you staring at one another" is composed of the interrogative *lammah* (hM*l*) (law-maw), "why" and the verb *ra'ah* (hA*r*) (raw-aw), which is in the hithpael (reflexive) stem indicating that Jacob's sons stared questioningly at one another, waiting for the other to suggest the next move.

The indecisiveness of Jacob's sons is due to the fact that they all regarded Egypt with apprehension since they sold Joseph to Ishmaelite/Midianites who were heading down to Egypt where they sold Joseph to Potiphar in Egypt. Jacob's sons knew that there was grain in Egypt, they heard the reports and saw the caravans laden with grain but they hesitated because of their collective guilty conscience, remembering how they sold their brother into slavery in Egypt. The sound of the word Egypt stirred their collective conscience, reminding them of their mistreatment of Joseph and so Egypt was the last place that they wanted to go. Joseph's ten brothers were living with a guilty secret for over twenty years and must have thought often of Joseph, wondering what happened to him in Egypt.

As we will see later on this chapter and the ones to follow Jacob never stopped grieving for Joseph, which in turn reminded his sons of the crime they committed against Joseph some twenty years before.

Jacob's decisiveness and initiative is demonstrated in his statement "Behold, I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down there and buy some for us from that place, so that we may live and not die."

After a period of over twenty years, Jacob reemerges once again as a man of action,

exercising his authority over his family and initiative in a crisis.

In Genesis 42:1, Jacob informs his sons that he "saw" (Hebrew verb *ra'ah*) that there was grain in Egypt indicating that he observed his neighbors the Canaanites returning from Egypt laden with grain.

In Genesis 42:2, he says that he "heard" (Hebrew verb *shama`*) that there was grain in Egypt indicating that Jacob had listened carefully to reports from caravan traders like the Ishmaelites or from the Canaanites that there was grain in Egypt.

Genesis 42:3

"Then ten brothers of Joseph went down to buy grain from Egypt."

The designation the "brothers of Joseph" foreshadows and anticipates the impending meeting and reconciliation between Joseph and his brothers.

Joseph's "ten brothers" refers to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan and Naphtali (See Genesis 30:1-8).

In Genesis 42:1-2, the word "grain" is the noun *shever* (rB#v#) (sheh-ver), which derives its meaning from the verb *shavar* (rB^v*) (shaw-var), which means, "to break" hence "that which breaks out of the shell," that is "grain."

Shever refers clearly to "grain" since grain was a major staple and major item of the marketplace in Egypt and around the world in the days of the patriarchs. Further indicating that this word refers to grain is that in Genesis 41:7 the noun *shibboleth* (t!#B)v!) (shib-bo-leth) appears which in Egypt would be wheat.

Egypt was famous in the ancient world not only for its cattle but also its wheat and was known as the breadbasket of the Roman Empire.

In Genesis 42:3, the word "grain" is the noun *bar* (rB^) (bawr), which according to its root means, "pure" thus emphasizing the pure, clean grain after the chaff has been removed or in other words, after it has been winnowed.

Genesis 42:4

“But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, ‘I am afraid that harm may befall him.’”

“Benjamin” (/YM!Y*N+b!) (bin-yaw-mene) was the lone full brother of Joseph since they had the same mother “Rachel” whereas the mothers of Jacob’s other ten sons were Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah (See Genesis 30:22-24, Genesis 35:18, 43:29).

His mother Rachel died giving birth to him as recorded in Genesis 35:16-20 and she originally named him “Ben-oni,” which means, “son of my sorrow,” which expressed her anguish and pain she experienced while giving birth to him. However, Jacob did not want his son to feel guilty for the death of his mother but rather wanted him to feel loved and that he was fortunate to have him and so he changed the child’s name to “Benjamin,” which means, “son of my right hand.” The right hand in the ancient world denoted power or a man’s strength.

“Benjamin” was also the only one of Jacob’s sons that was born in the land of Canaan since his other eleven sons and his daughter Dinah were born in Paddan Aram.

Like his eleven brothers, “Benjamin” became the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, which bears his name. He is the focal point of the encounter of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt when the former was the prime minister of Egypt and unrecognized by his brothers.

Jacob states to his sons that the reason why he is not sending Benjamin with them to Egypt is that “I am afraid that harm may befall him,” which demonstrates a lack of faith in God’s protection for Benjamin.

Benjamin’s mother Rachel died giving birth to him and Jacob was deceived by his sons into thinking that Joseph had been killed by a wild animal. Therefore, Jacob was fearful that misfortune would happen to Benjamin as well and so he kept Benjamin close by and was overly protective of him.

The designation “Joseph’s brother Benjamin” reveals that Jacob’s family is still plagued by favoritism in that he is partial to Benjamin just as

he was to Joseph since both boys were sons of his favorite wife Rachel.

While the other ten sons were sent to Egypt, Benjamin was kept near, under the watchful eye of his father. Therefore, Jacob guards Benjamin with a fear that has grown out of his loss of Joseph, which he has never recovered from. So right at the beginning of this new act in the drama, the narrator reminds us of the emotional bonds between Jacob and Benjamin. Benjamin is now the apple of his father’s eye like Joseph was and as his mother was. So Jacob continues to demonstrate more affection towards Benjamin, the child of his favorite wife Rachel than the children of Leah.

Genesis 42:5

“So the sons of Israel came to buy grain among those who were coming, for the famine was in the land of Canaan also.”

The designation “the sons of Israel” emphasizes the national identity of Israel/Jacob’s sons and not their personal identity as Jacob’s sons. This designation is significant because the trip taken by Jacob’s sons to Egypt had great implications for Jacob’s family who were the progenitors of the twelve tribes of the nation that bore his father’s name. The nation of Israel was in its infancy at this time and this trip to Egypt would lead to their deliverance from the famine and relocation to Egypt for over four hundred years. This designation identifies Jacob/Israel’s sons by their national designation, numbering them among the various ethnic groups inhabiting the land of Canaan that went to Egypt to buy grain. The brothers will enter Egypt as a nation in its infancy whereas their descendants will leave four hundred years later as a powerful nation. Therefore, we see that sons of Israel arrive in Egypt along with the other Canaanite groups to buy grain and yet as we will see, they alone attract attention in Egypt since Joseph is now the prime minister of Egypt responsible for the distribution of grain in Egypt.

Genesis 42:6 records the fulfillment of the first stage of Joseph’s two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11, which revealed that he would rule over his entire family.

The dream/prophecy recorded in Genesis 37:5-11 was fulfilled in three stages: (1) Joseph’s brothers

bowed once to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt without Benjamin and Jacob (See Genesis 42:6). (2) With Benjamin but without Jacob, Joseph's brothers bowed down twice to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 43:26, 28). (3) All Joseph's brothers bow down to him along with his father Jacob (See Genesis 46:1-27).

Genesis 37:2-11

"These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father."

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic."

"His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms."

"Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."

"He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.'"

"Then his brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

"Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, 'Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'"

"He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually

come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?'"

"His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

Now, let's turn to Genesis 42:6 to see the fulfillment of the first stage of Joseph's two prophetic dreams.

Genesis 42:6

"Now Joseph was the ruler over the land; he was the one who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and bowed down to him with their faces to the ground."

"Ruler" is the noun *shallit* (fyL!V^) (shal-leet), which refers to the fact that Pharaoh had delegated to Joseph absolute power and authority over the nation of Egypt and reflects the Egyptian title "Chief of the Entire Land," which is a title synonymous with "prime minister."

The statement "he (Joseph) was the one who sold to all the people of the land" refers to the well-known Egyptian office of "Overseer of the Granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt." The duties of this office involved the collection of tax payments on field produce (See Genesis 47:24) as well as the storage of the grain of bumper crops for distribution in years of famine. Therefore, we see that Joseph held two offices since not only was he the prime minister over Egypt but also he held the office of "Overseer of the Granaries of Upper and Lower Egypt." Joseph managed the sale and distribution of all the grain that was held in reserve.

All foreigners had to meet with Joseph personally as the prime minister of the land of Egypt since he was the only one in Egypt who was delegated authority by Pharaoh to sell to them.

Joseph's brothers bow down to him, which was appropriate act of respect for a sovereign of a nation. Unknowingly, by bowing down to him, Joseph's brothers fulfilled the first stage in the fulfillment of his prophetic dreams that he related to them at seventeen years of age, which are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Now, if you recall, we studied in Genesis 41 that Joseph made extensive trips throughout Egypt and delegated authority to civil administrators in each

city in Egypt who would be subordinate to him and would help him execute his plan that he presented to Pharaoh, which is recorded in Genesis 41:33-37. Therefore, Joseph did “not” personally manage the sale of grain in every detail to each individual who came to buy. However, undoubtedly, he would give special attention to foreigners. Especially, Hebrews from Canaan since his family resided there and the famine was severe there as well.

Therefore, Joseph was anticipating the arrival of his family to buy grain and would have given orders to his subordinates in each city to bring word to him when any Hebrew men from Canaan came to buy grain so that he could be present in the hopes of having a reunion and seeing the fulfillment of his two prophetic dreams.

The fact that Joseph’s brothers bowed down to him was according to Joseph’s prediction recorded in Genesis 37:5-11 and demonstrated that his two dreams were inspired by God and were a part of God’s plan and sovereign will from eternity past. Therefore, these events were a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Jeremiah 1:12, that the Lord watches over His Word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:12, “Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.’”

It is also a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Isaiah 46:8-11 that the Lord will accomplish in time that which He has spoken and planned from eternity past.

Isaiah 46:9-11

“Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, ‘My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.’ Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.”

The fulfillment of the first stage of Joseph’s two prophetic dreams was also a manifestation of the omnipotence of His Word.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

The fulfillment of the first stage of Joseph’s two prophetic dreams teaches us that we must wait patiently upon God.

Hebrews 6:13-15

“For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself.”

“saying, ‘I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.’”

“And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.”

Psalms 37:7, “Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him.”

The fulfillment of the first stage of Joseph’s two prophetic dreams teaches us that perseverance or endurance is essential in order to receive the fulfillment of God’s promises.

Perseverance is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances. Joseph had to continue to bear up under the difficult circumstance of being enslaved in Egypt and unjustly imprisoned in order to finally receive the fulfillment of his two prophetic dreams that he would rule over his family.

Romans 5:3, “And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance.”

The Scriptures are designed to produce perseverance in us and to encourage us.

Romans 15:4, “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”

Many times, the two prophetic dreams gave encouragement to Joseph while in servitude and while imprisoned.

Next, we will note Genesis 42:7-17, which records for us Joseph's brothers' first audience with him in Egypt.

Genesis 42:7

“When Joseph saw his brothers he recognized them, but he disguised himself to them and spoke to them harshly. And he said to them, ‘Where have you come from?’ And they said, ‘From the land of Canaan, to buy food.’”

Genesis 42:8

“But Joseph had recognized his brothers, although they did not recognize him.”

Joseph was 39 years of age at this point in the narrative when his brothers bowed down to him in fulfillment of his prophetic dreams (he was 40 if we count his 17th year) and had spent 22 years in Egypt. He recognized his brothers but his brothers did not recognize him because he had been Egyptianized as we saw in Genesis 41.

It would have been easy for Joseph to recognize his brothers since the sons of Leah would have been full grown men when he last saw them when he was 17.

Egyptians were clean shaven for hygienic reasons while most Asiatics usually wore beards and so Joseph was clean shaven and his brothers were not. Joseph would be further disguised in that he went by an Egyptian name. Joseph's Egyptian name was “Zaphenath-paneah,” which means, “God has spoken and he (Pharaoh and Egypt) shall live.” The new name symbolized Joseph's new identity and new, fresh start in life in Egyptian society and validates his new position as prime minister of Egypt.

Furthermore, Joseph's brothers did not recognize him because he spoke Egyptian and not Hebrew when addressing them. Also, he spoke harshly to his brothers as an Egyptian would do to Hebrew shepherds, which further disguised him. Therefore, Joseph's brothers saw an Egyptian ruler with the Egyptian name who spoke Egyptian who spoke harshly as an Egyptian would do to a Hebrew and so they did not recognize him.

Joseph chooses to disguise himself since he remembered full well how his brothers resented him for his long sleeved multicolored coat and how they attempted to murder him and then sold him into slavery as a result of communicating his two prophetic dreams to them. People who attempt to murder their brother and then sell him into slavery cannot be trusted and so Joseph disguises himself. Joseph could not be sure how they would act now that his prophetic dreams were fulfilled when they bowed down to him.

Also, he must have wondered to himself how much more jealous they would be if they saw him in his position as prime minister with a gold chain around his neck and Pharaoh's signet ring on his finger. He knew if they were still jealous he could not have fellowship with them and they might not accept his help and so he kept these things in mind when he addressed his brothers.

Joseph did not seek revenge upon his brothers and had no anger or resentment towards his brothers as demonstrated by the names he gave his sons. His desire was to bring his brothers to repentance in the matter of himself and to reunite with his family as later events would demonstrate. However, he knew if they were still jealous and resentful that he could have no fellowship with them. Therefore, he decided to test them to be sure he could have fellowship with them.

Egyptians were known to be suspicious of foreigners so Joseph proceeded to talk to his brothers as they expected Egyptians to talk to them since Egyptians disliked Hebrew shepherds and would not even eat with them. In fact, the ancient Egyptians considered all who entered at the northeastern boundary of their country as potential enemies and of course Joseph's brothers came from Canaan and would have to proceed through this boundary. Therefore, when Joseph speaks harshly to his brothers, it is not because he is bitter towards them or is seeking revenge or is paying them back for what they did to him but rather it is his attempt to determine if his brothers had changed over the years so that a reunion with them could be possible.

Joseph disguised himself to his brothers until it could be determined if their character had changed and had been transformed by God just as his

character had been transformed by God through circumstances.

Joseph's brothers attempt to disarm suspicion by giving more information than was asked for in that not only do they state where they came from but also their purpose as well. Therefore, Joseph's brothers were in effect saying politely that they were in Egypt to buy grain just like everyone else because of the famine.

In Genesis 42:8, the statement that Joseph recognized his brothers is a repetition of the same statement in Genesis 42:7. In Genesis 42:7, Joseph's recognition follows his brothers bowing down to him.

The repetition in Genesis 42:8 just prior to Joseph's recollection of his two prophetic dreams syntactically links the statement "he remembered" in Genesis 42:9 with the statement "they bowed down to him" in Genesis 42:6.

Genesis 42:9

"Joseph remembered the dreams which he had about them, and said to them, 'You are spies; you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land.'"

The statement "Joseph remembered the dreams, which he had about them" refers to his two prophetic dreams he had when he was seventeen years of age that predicted he would rule over his family and that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

The sight of his brothers prostrating themselves before him suddenly reminds Joseph that his two prophetic dreams have been fulfilled right before his eyes. However, it also reminds Joseph of the hatred his brothers as a result of telling them his dreams and their attempt to murder him and then selling him into slavery.

Joseph had forgotten his adversities with regards to his father's household in the sense that the sting of those memories was fading due to being blessed by God in Egypt but he now remembers his dreams.

Joseph not only realized the fulfillment of his dreams but also the reason for them. He saw that God had a purpose for placing him in his position of power, and this purpose was for him to function as the family head, protecting and preserving his

family. He had great power and prestige, but God had given these to him for a purpose much greater than merely to seek revenge. He saw that leadership involved power, but that it also brought upon him the weight of responsibility. At times the greatest need is not to be aware of the power at our disposal, but of the purpose for which this power has been given.

So at this point in the narrative, Joseph is having conflicting emotions. His sense of contentment is shaken by the unpleasant memories of his brothers selling him into slavery. He is desperate for news about his father and only full brother Benjamin back in Canaan. However, he feels he needs to find out conclusively whether or not his brothers regret their actions in the past towards him and have been transformed by God just as he had been.

Also, remember, Benjamin is not with his brothers, which would arouse suspicion in Joseph as to whether or not they had acted violently towards Benjamin as they did him. Therefore, he decides to embark upon a series of tests to determine if his brothers could be trusted.

Joseph assumes the role of a tough professional interrogator in order to determine if his full brother Benjamin and his father are still alive. Though outwardly he speaks harshly with his brothers, inwardly Joseph has great affection for them, which is demonstrated by his actions later on in Genesis 45 when he reveals his identity to his brothers.

Syntactically, Genesis 42:9 links Joseph's accusations with his remembering of his two prophetic dreams and so he now acts according to the first dream of all eleven bowing down to him by strategizing to get Benjamin to join them. Therefore, in order to test his brothers' character and to worm out of them the confession that they have a brother and without revealing his true identity, Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies, which would be a crime worthy of death in Egypt.

Like God, Joseph knew that in order to properly analyze a person's character the most important elements are made visible when the test of adversity is applied and so Joseph applies the pressure to his brothers to determine their true character.

The accusation of espionage would “not” seem unusual to Joseph’s brothers (See Exodus 1:9-10; cf. 2 Samuel 3:25; 10:3) since frontier guards at Egypt’s Asian border routinely checked travelers to discover spies who might indicate an imminent attack. Armies in need of food often sought out any weaknesses in the fortifications in order to plunder stockpiled grain, which is signified by the phrase “the undefended parts of our land.”

Therefore, the accusation of espionage provided Joseph with a convenient pretext under which he could have the brothers arrested and detained and subjected to more interrogation.

Genesis 42:10

“Then they said to him, ‘No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food.’”

Genesis 42:11

“We are all sons of one man; we are honest men, your servants are not spies.”

Joseph’s brothers respond to his accusation of espionage with four short sentences in apposition, which climax with an emphatic rebuttal of Joseph’s charge.

The phrase “your servants” is used twice by the brothers and is deferential language since he is the prime minister of Egypt and is both good Egyptian and Hebrew etiquette. Their first statement reiterates their statement in Genesis 42:7 that they have come to buy food because of the famine, which is a true statement.

Their second statement “we are all sons of one man” would refute the charge of espionage since no father would dare jeopardize the lives of all his sons by having them involved in such a dangerous occupation. They are in effect saying that it is absolutely improbable that ten brothers would be traveling together as a group in order to spy on a nation, rather if they were spying, they would have at least split up.

Their third statement “we are honest men” will be tested further by Joseph but up to this point in their audience with Joseph, it is a true statement.

The last statement “we are not spies” reiterates and emphasizes their previous rebuttal of the charge of spying.

Genesis 42:12

“Yet he said to them, ‘No, but you have come to look at the undefended parts of our land!’”

Joseph hammers home the accusation of espionage in order to get information out of them regarding their father and Benjamin. He repeats the accusation four times in order to break down their resistance (See Genesis 42:12, 14, 15, 20).

Joseph should not be accused of sin by making these false accusations and lying since such tactics are a necessary part of counteracting spying. For example, Rahab was commended for lying in connection with espionage when she hid the Israelite spies.

Genesis 42:13

“But they said, ‘Your servants are twelve brothers in all, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and behold, the youngest is with our father today, and one is no longer alive.’”

Joseph’s brothers’ initial rebuttal to the charge of espionage “we are all sons of one man” is so compelling that they repeat it and even provide more details. The brothers believe that by giving Joseph more details that this would make their rebuttal more believable and in fact, it gave Joseph exactly the information he was looking for.

The statement “Your servants are twelve brothers in all” is of course a true statement and provides the exact number of sons for Joseph.

The statement “sons of one man” implies that not all of them have the same mother.

The prepositional phrase “in the land of Canaan” again reiterates their statement to Joseph in Genesis 42:7 of where they live and is necessary since as Hebrews they would have not worn the attire of the Canaanites.

The statement “the youngest is with our father today” is exactly what Joseph wanted to hear since it is a reference to his only full brother, Benjamin.

Joseph will use this statement as a pretext for pursuing further the accusation of espionage since he could say that since their father knew that espionage was a dangerous endeavor he kept one son behind with him in Canaan in order to

guarantee the family's future if the brothers were caught and executed.

The statement "one is no longer alive" is a reference of course to Joseph and expresses his brothers' belief that he is dead since they actually presumed that since they have heard nothing about Joseph for over twenty years that he must have died in slavery. In Genesis 44:20, Judah confirms this belief that the brothers thought Joseph to have died.

Genesis 42:14-15

"Joseph said to them, 'It is as I said to you, you are spies, by this you will be tested: by the life of Pharaoh, you shall not go from this place unless your youngest brother comes here!'"

In response to his brothers' statement that "the youngest is with our father today" Joseph hammers home the espionage accusation in order that he might verify their statement that they are honest men and that Benjamin is in fact alive and has not been killed by his brothers.

Based upon the past actions of his brothers in attempting to kill him and selling him into slavery, Joseph seeks to test the veracity of their statement by demanding that they produce Benjamin and bring him into his presence. Therefore, in order to confirm that Benjamin is alive, Joseph's brothers are presumed guilty of espionage until they can prove their innocence and so the burden of disproof is on the brothers.

Genesis 42:16

"Send one of you that he may get your brother, while you remain confined, that your words may be tested, whether there is truth in you." But if not, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you are spies."

The expression "by the life of Pharaoh" gives a statement the character of an oath that is validated and sanctioned by the power and authority of Pharaoh. Therefore, the expression "by the life of Pharaoh" gives Joseph's statements in Genesis 42:15-16 the character of an oath that is validated and sanctioned by the power and authority of Pharaoh and is designed to scare Joseph's brothers and encourage reflection by them, which leads to repentance and reconciliation. This expression

does "not" mean that Joseph is disloyal to the Lord but rather simply reflects the fact that he considers himself under the authority of Pharaoh who himself is under the authority of God (See Romans 13:1-7) and would further conceal his true identity.

Genesis 42:17

"So he put them all together in prison for three days."

Joseph plainly states to his brothers that they were in fact spies, in which case their story about a younger brother was a mere fabrication, or they were telling the truth. The matter could easily be resolved by simply producing their younger brother. All of the brothers would be detained except one, who could be dispatched to bring back the proof of their honesty. Joseph placed all of the brothers in confinement together as opposed to solitary confinement in order to cause them to reflect upon the meaning of what was taking place in their lives and to cause them to examine their collective conscience, which they did since in Genesis 42:21 they acknowledge their cruel treatment of Joseph. This was not punishment, but it was preparation, just as his confinement had been and it served to intensify the brothers' comprehension of the gravity of the situation.

The three-day imprisonment provided Joseph with time to plan his strategy and it would also impress the brothers with the importance of cooperating with Joseph and also give them a taste of what Joseph had endured for three years. Joseph may have intended that they serve one day's imprisonment for each year he had suffered incarceration because of their hatred.

The three day imprisonment would invoke any rivalries as a result of their awareness that only one could return to Canaan and that the fate of all the others would depend on that one.

In Genesis 42:18-24, we will read of Joseph's brothers' having a second audience with him in Egypt.

Genesis 42:18-20

"Now Joseph said to them on the third day, 'Do this and live, for I fear God: if you are honest men, let one of your brothers be confined in

your prison; but as for the rest of you, go, carry grain for the famine of your households, and bring your youngest brother to me, so your words may be verified, and you will not die.' And they did so."

Joseph's brothers had to endure three days in prison whereas Joseph had to endure fourteen years of slavery and three years of prison because of his brothers' decision to sell him into slavery. Those three days must have been miserable and must have been filled with fear. They would have been asking themselves as to whether or not they would ever return to their father and would they ever regain their freedom? Also, they would have been discussing amongst themselves as to who would be the one who would be released to return to Canaan while the others remained captive? For them, Joseph's experience, which took fourteen years, was condensed to three days.

The three-day imprisonment provided Joseph with time to plan his strategy and it would also impress the brothers with the importance of cooperating with Joseph and also give them a taste of what Joseph had endured for three years.

Joseph statement "Do this and live, for I fear God" would reveal to his brothers that he who they do not recognize but rather saw as an Egyptian ruler, was a ruler who acknowledged that he was accountable to God and would therefore give them an opportunity to demonstrate their innocence and would not treat them unjustly.

"Fear" is the verb *yare* (ar@y*) (yaw-ray), which means, "to have reverence and respect" for God and so we see that Joseph expresses to his brothers that he has "reverence" and "respect" for God.

Reverence for God is an attitude of deep respect and awe for God and respect for God is to esteem the excellence of the Person of God as manifested through His attributes such as love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, justice, righteousness, truth, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty.

Joseph statement "Do this and live, for I fear God" also would reveal to his brothers that he was a ruler who cared for the needy and the hungry (See Job 29:12-13).

Leviticus 25:17, "So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the LORD your God."

Just as Joseph's brothers replaced their first plan to kill Joseph with a wiser, gentler plan by selling him into slavery so Joseph also replaces his first plan to imprison all his brothers and send one back to get Benjamin with a wiser, gentler plan by imprisoning only one brother and sending the rest back to Canaan to get Benjamin.

Once Joseph had heard his brothers confess their guilt in the way that they treated him and acknowledged the justice in their being imprisoned, he changes his plan and allows all the brothers to go back to Canaan except for one of them.

Also, Joseph changed his plan because of concern for his father and his brother Benjamin and the rest of the family and did not want them to continue to suffer because of a lack of food.

Joseph's new proposal to his brothers demonstrates to them that he is a fair, wise, reasonable ruler who respects God. It also demonstrates to the reader that Joseph's intentions towards his brothers was not revenge but rather only good in that he does not want his family in Canaan to suffer any longer from the famine.

This statement "do this and live for I fear God" as well as his demand would have filled them with hope and thanksgiving to God and gave them encouragement dispelling any fear of judgment. This statement reveals that Joseph's intention was not revenge when he spoke harshly to his brothers and imprisoned them for three days but rather his desire was for a reconciliation with them and only the best for his brothers. But certain changes had to take place before he could reunite with them in that their self-interest and cruelty which had caused them to sell him into slavery must be dealt with.

Notice that Joseph does "not" use the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, "Lord" when addressing his brothers but rather uses *Elohim*, "God" since he is attempting to conceal his identity to his brothers.

To his brothers, Joseph was a heathen, Gentile ruler who had no covenant relationship with God

like they did, so Joseph continues to keep up this appearance in order to determine if they have indeed repented from their ill treatment of him and that God has transformed their character.

The fact that Joseph decides to release all of his brothers except for one reveals that his intention for incarcerating them for three days was so that they could examine their collective conscience in the matter in which they treated him.

Joseph placed all of the brothers in confinement together as opposed to solitary confinement in order to cause them to reflect upon the meaning of what was taking place in their lives and to cause them to examine their collective conscience, which they did since in Genesis 42:21 they acknowledge their cruel treatment of Joseph. This was not punishment, but it was preparation, just as his confinement had been and it served to intensify the brothers' comprehension of the gravity of the situation.

As we noted before, the three day imprisonment would invoke any rivalries as a result of their awareness that only one could return to Canaan and that the fate of all the others would depend on that one.

Joseph's new proposal to his brothers that he release all of them except for one is designed to make his brothers relive their actions against him some twenty years before and his brothers recognize the parallels and consider it retribution from God. Joseph's brothers are now faced with two threats to their lives, the famine and now with Joseph if they do not bring back Benjamin to Egypt. Both threats contribute to Joseph's brothers confronting their sin against Joseph leading to reconciliation and fellowship.

The statement "and they did so" reveals that Joseph's brothers were in agreement to accept Joseph's new conditions.

Genesis 42:21

"Then they said to one another, 'Truly we are guilty concerning our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he pleaded with us, yet we would not listen; therefore this distress has come upon us.'"

The purpose for which Joseph imprisoned his brothers for three days was accomplished in that Joseph's brothers recognized the justice of their predicament and confessed their collective guilt in the way they treated Joseph over twenty years before.

Psalm 32:5, "I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah."

The statement "We are guilty concerning our brother" was a collective confession of guilt and demonstrates that Joseph's brothers did "not" blame each other but rather each takes personal responsibility for their own personal guilt in the matter of Joseph. The prison experience and Joseph's verdict brought about the first indication of conviction of sin in the lives of these men.

We should not forget that Joseph's brothers were a bunch of criminals since they were guilty of murder, fornication, incest and had lied to their father and hated Joseph and had even been cruel to animals at Shechem (See Genesis 34). Therefore, these were not kind and tenderhearted shepherds but rather they considered themselves kings, responsible to no one and even though they lived under God's heaven and were His covenant people, they did not acknowledge God.

This is the first time we read that there was any expression of guilt in the way they treated Joseph and soon they will start to recognize that God has something to do with this. Their discussion amongst themselves is not only a summary of Genesis 37:12-30 when they sold Joseph into slavery but also gives us graphic details concerning their treatment of Joseph in that it reveals Joseph's reaction to having been thrown into the pit by them and their lack of compassion.

The brothers equate their present distress with Joseph's some twenty years before demonstrating their awareness of the providence of God in their lives, overruling their lives and requiring restitution. They recognize that under God's authority they have reaped what they have sowed.

Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

In this moment of great adversity, where their lives are at stake and those of their families, the tortured consciences of the brothers are manifested by their confession of guilt in their treatment of Joseph. The brothers saw divine retribution in what had happened to them and confessed their guilt in dealing with Joseph as they had done in his hearing. However, Joseph wanted to assure himself that they had also borne the fruits of genuine repentance meaning that they had taken a different course of action with Benjamin and Jacob and so he did not reveal himself to them at this time.

Genesis 42:22

“Reuben answered them, saying, ‘Did I not tell you, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Now comes the reckoning for his blood.”

Reuben statement to his brothers “Did I not tell you, ‘do not sin against the boy’ and you would not listen” is a reference to his attempt to talk them out of murdering Joseph (See Genesis 37:21-22).

This statement along with the statement “Now comes the reckoning for his (Joseph’s) blood” clearly reveals that Reuben like his father believed that Joseph was murdered by his brothers indicating that his brothers did “not” tell him that they sold him into slavery.

The phrase “reckoning for his blood” is a reference to the biblical idiom “cover up his blood” that is used by Judah in Genesis 37:26. Since the time of Cain, the blood of a murder victim was said to “cry out” for justice, thus uncovered blood served as a constant reminder of a crime and as an incitement to revenge. Therefore, Judah’s use of the idiom and Reuben’s reference to it reveals their respect for the laws of God, which prohibit murder according to Exodus 20:13 and according to Genesis 9:6 is to be punished through capital punishment.

In Genesis 37:29-30, the fact that Reuben’s brothers do “not” respond to his questions as to the whereabouts of Joseph and their lack of surprise that Joseph was not in the pit, and their attempt to murder Joseph not too long ago, would lead Reuben to believe that his brothers had killed Joseph and disposed of the body.

There is no indication that Joseph’s brothers informed Reuben that they had sold Joseph into slavery but rather he believed that Joseph was dead since if his brothers had informed Reuben that they sold Joseph into slavery, he would have pursued the caravan to Egypt in order to buy Joseph back!

Reuben’s brothers would “not” want to inform him that they sold Joseph to the Midianites since they knew he would pursue the caravan and buy Joseph back since he previously prevented them from killing Joseph. Therefore, by delivering Joseph they would have risked having their conspiracy to kill him exposed, not to mention their actions in selling him into slavery!

Judah would have no desire to tell Reuben of his scheme since he also knew that Reuben would pursue the caravan and buy Joseph back from the Midianites, which would result in exposing his scheme to sell Joseph into slavery, even though the scheme was an attempt to save Joseph from death.

For the first time, Joseph is aware of the fact that Reuben’s intention for stopping his murder and having him thrown into the pit was to deliver him when his brothers were not around since Reuben never revealed his motive for suggesting Joseph be thrown into the pit rather than murdered.

Reuben was apparently seeking to buy some time, intending to rescue Joseph and return him back home to the safety of their father when the others were not around. Therefore, Reuben in effect saved Joseph’s life since if he was not there to stop his brothers, they would have murdered Joseph.

Reuben hid his motives for having Joseph thrown into a pit rather than murdered because he feared his brothers would not listen to him and would turn on him. Until now Joseph held Reuben responsible for having him thrown into the pit, however, he never knew that Reuben’s intention was to rescue him when his brothers were not around.

Genesis 42:23

“They did not know, however, that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between them.”

The fact that Joseph used an interpreter to eavesdrop on his brothers' conversation does "not" mean that he could not understand Hebrew anymore since he speaks to them in Hebrew without an interpreter when he reveals his identity to them in Genesis 45. Joseph employs the interpreter since he wants to continue to conceal his identity and conduct himself as an Egyptian prime minister who is dealing with foreigners suspected of espionage.

Evidently, Joseph's brothers did "not" realize that an interpreter was eavesdropping on their conversation since they speak freely of their guilt in their attempt to murder Joseph.

Genesis 42:24

"He turned away from them and wept. But when he returned to them and spoke to them, he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes."

Joseph's weeping was not only an expression of his love and affection for his brothers but also an expression of gratitude towards the Lord for bringing his brothers to a confession of their guilt leading to reconciliation with them.

Weeping is an emotion and emotion is the responder to what is in the mentality of the soul and so we see that Joseph's weeping is an expression of his emotion, which is the response to what was in the mentality of his soul, which was love for his brothers and gratitude towards the Lord.

The Lord Jesus Christ wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:6) and before His entrance into Jerusalem to present Himself to the nation of Israel as Messiah (See Luke 19:41) and believers are commanded to weep with those who weep (See Romans 12:15).

The statement "when he (Joseph) returned to them (his brothers)" indicates that Joseph left the room and wept in another room where his brothers could not hear him weep.

The fact that Joseph does "not" detain Reuben who is the oldest but rather detains Simeon reveals that Joseph was fully aware that Reuben attempted to save him and that Simeon was the mastermind behind the plot to murder Joseph.

Simeon was the master mind behind the plot to murder Joseph since he and Levi were the master minds of the massacre at Shechem and had a reputation for cruelty (See Genesis 34; 49:5-7). Further indicating that Simeon was behind the plot to murder Joseph is that he had a motive since he was one of the sons of Leah, who were resentful towards Joseph since Jacob favored Joseph's mother Rachel over Leah. Joseph undoubtedly realized that Reuben was trying to save him and that Simeon wanted him murdered and so he released Reuben although he is the oldest and detained Simeon, the next oldest of the sons of Leah (See Genesis 42:24).

Joseph has Simeon bound before the eyes of his brothers in order to impress upon them the seriousness of his intentions and their situation and to test their solidarity.

Genesis 42:25-28 records Joseph's brothers leaving him and returning to Canaan with food.

Genesis 42:25

"Then Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain and to restore every man's money in his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. And thus it was done for them."

"Grain" is the noun *bar* (rB^)(bawr), which according to its root means, "pure" thus emphasizing the pure, clean grain after the chaff has been removed or in other words, after it has been winnowed.

"Bags" is the noun *k^eli* (y!K+)(kel-ee), which denotes a "container" or an "earthenware receptacle" that would preserve grain by keeping it dry.

Undoubtedly, Joseph's brothers had several of these earthenware containers or receptacles since they had sixty-seven people to feed according to Genesis 46:27.

"Money" is the noun *keseph* ([s#K#)(keh-sef), which means, "silver" which in the Near East in the days of the patriarchs was used as a measure of value and was also a mark of wealth.

"Sack" is the noun *saq* (qC^)(sak), which denotes a thick coarse cloth, usually dark in color and made mostly from goat's hair, although camel's hair was sometimes used and refers to the

personal sackcloth bags of the brothers and were distinct from the earthenware containers.

Each of the brothers had brought his own silver to buy grain for his own family as indicated by the statement “Then Joseph gave orders...to restore every man's money in his sack.”

“Restore” is the verb *shuv* (bWv) (shoov), which means, “to return,” thus Joseph “returned” the silver to his brothers that they used to buy grain from him.

Therefore, Joseph not only commanded his servants to fill his brothers’ earthenware containers with grain but also without his brothers’ knowledge he returned their silver that they used to pay for the grain, placing it in their personal bags. Furthermore, Joseph gave his brothers provisions in the form of food for the journey itself so that they would not have to use up the food that was for the family, which to the brothers would appear as a very gracious gesture and put them at ease. These provisions would not only provide for the needs of the brothers on the journey home but also ensure that they would not discover the money until it was too late to turn back.

More than likely, smaller, separate sacks were provided with food for the men and perhaps their animals, so that the grain sacks with the money would not be opened until they arrived home.

Joseph returned the silver to his brothers without their knowledge since they find out that he had done this only after they were well on their way back home to Canaan.

The Scriptures do “not” tell us why Joseph returned the silver but through inference we can see that there were at least four reasons. First of all, he wanted to be generous with his brothers but without giving them an explanation, which could reveal his true identity. Undoubtedly, Joseph, out of his own pocket, paid for the grain that he gave to his brothers so as to compensate Pharaoh.

Secondly, Joseph returned the silver to his brothers in order to awaken the conscience of each of them to the extent that they saw God’s hand in dealing with their cruel treatment of Joseph. While in prison they acknowledged their guilt but Joseph did not hear them acknowledge God’s hand in

their imprisonment. Therefore, he continues to attempt to arouse the conscience of each of his brothers so that they acknowledge God’s providential hand and the means in which he does this was to return the silver to each of them since the silver would remind them that they sold Joseph for twenty pieces of silver.

This leads us to the third reason, which was to test the brothers as to whether they valued money more than the life of their brother Simeon since in the case of Joseph they demonstrated they valued money more than the life of Joseph by selling him to the Midianites for twenty shekels of silver.

The fact that the brothers did not return immediately to Egypt to return the silver does not imply that they didn’t value Simeon’s life since it was their father who prevented them from returning to Egypt since he feared that he would lose Benjamin if he sent them with the rest of his brothers (See Genesis 42:29-38).

The fourth and final reason was to give the brothers an opportunity to demonstrate that they were indeed what they claimed to be, honest men.

Genesis 42:26

“So they loaded their donkeys with their grain and departed from there.”

“They” refers to Joseph’s servants. The phrase “their grain” refers to the grain that the brothers purchased with silver from Joseph and indicates to the reader that the silver later discovered by the brothers in each of their personal sackcloth bags was not stolen by them.

The journey back home covered a distance of approximately 250-300 miles since Jacob was living in Hebron and Joseph’s headquarters would have been near the city of Memphis, which is about 10 miles south of the present city of Cairo. Thus, the journey back home would have taken approximately 3 weeks.

Genesis 42:27

“As one of them opened his sack to give his donkey fodder at the lodging place, he saw his money; and behold, it was in the mouth of his sack.”

The expression “one of them” indicates only one of the brothers during the journey home opened his personal sackcloth bag and found his silver while the rest learned when they got home that their silver had also been returned according to Genesis 42:35.

Genesis 43:21 records the brothers informing Joseph’s steward that each of them found their silver in the personal bags while on the journey home. Whereas Genesis 42:27 records that only one brother found his silver in his bag during the journey home and Genesis 42:35 records that the rest of their brothers discovered the same when they arrived home. Therefore, on the surface it appears that the brothers lied to Joseph’s steward but this apparent contradiction is reconciled in that the brothers were not concerned about precision in their accounts when speaking to Joseph but simply conveying the fact that their silver was returned to them without their knowledge.

Genesis 42:28

“Then he said to his brothers, ‘My money has been returned, and behold, it is even in my sack.’ And their hearts sank, and they turned trembling to one another, saying, ‘What is this that God has done to us?’”

The expression “their hearts sank” means that the brothers all nearly died of heart failure when they saw the silver in the sack.

The statement “they turned trembling to one another” refers to the trembling of the body as a result of emotional distress. Therefore, it refers to a sudden panic attack experienced by each of the brothers due to fear upon learning that the silver was returned.

The reason for this reaction on the part of the brothers was that they looked like thieves (See Genesis 42:35-36).

Their response to this misfortune was to acknowledge God’s justice and providential hand as indicated by the rhetorical question, “What is this that God has done to us?” This statement is an admission of guilt before God that they were wrong in their cruel treatment of Joseph. This is the first time that Joseph’s brothers mentioned God indicating that the conscience of each has been so aroused that they finally acknowledge

God’s providential hand behind the punishment for their crime against Joseph.

The fact that the brothers were not happy but rather frightened by the sight of the silver in their bags was a good sign since it indicated that they were no longer insensitive to God and that they no longer had a seared conscience. Their distress was a manifestation that they have reaped what they have sowed in that they were reaping distress in their own souls because they sowed distress in the soul of Joseph.

Galatians 6:7, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

The harm and pain that they brought on Joseph was now being visited on them and this caused them to consider how Joseph must have felt. The presence of the silver in their bags reminded them of the distress they caused Joseph over twenty years earlier and has softened their calloused hearts.

We will conclude our study of Genesis 42 by noting verses twenty-nine thru thirty-eight and read where Jacob’s sons giving him a report on their mission to Egypt.

Genesis 42:29-30

“When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them, saying, ‘The man, the lord of the land, spoke harshly with us, and took us for spies of the country.’”

“They” refers to Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Reuben, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.

The statement “they (nine of Joseph’s brothers) told him (Jacob) all that had happened to them” does “not” mean that the nine told Jacob everything that happened in Egypt but rather they are speaking in relative terms meaning they told their father all that they wanted him to know. This is indicated in that they fail to tell their father that they were imprisoned for three days as well as the shackling and imprisonment of Simeon.

Also, they did not tell their father of their remorse while sitting in prison for three days over their cruel treatment of Joseph. Neither, did they tell

their father about Reuben's opposition to the attempted assassination of Joseph.

The nine brothers report to their father only what is necessary to explain Simeon's absence and to emphasize the importance of sending Benjamin next time.

Joseph's brothers identify him to their father as "the man, the lord of the land," which emphasizes their ignorance of Joseph's identity. "Lord" is the noun *adhon* (/w)dā*) (aw-done), which refers to the governing authority over the land of Egypt, which we know is Joseph.

Genesis 42:31-32

"But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. We are twelve brothers, sons of our father; one is no longer alive, and the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan.'"

Their first statement to their father, "we are honest men" was being tested by Joseph in that he will force the brothers to produce Benjamin.

The second statement "we are not spies" rebuts the charge of spying.

The statement "we are twelve brothers" is a true statement and the statement "sons of our father" is also true, implying that not all of them have the same mother.

The statement "we are twelve brothers, sons of our father" would refute the charge of espionage since no father would dare jeopardize the lives of all his sons by having them involved in such a dangerous occupation. They are in effect saying that it is absolutely improbable that ten brothers would be traveling together as a group in order to spy on a nation, rather if they were spying, they would have at least split up.

The statement "one is no longer alive" is a reference of course to Joseph and expresses his brothers' belief that he is dead since they actually presumed that since they have heard nothing about Joseph for over twenty years that he must have died in slavery.

The statement "the youngest is with our father today in the land of Canaan" is a reference to Benjamin, Joseph's lone full brother. Joseph used

this statement as a pretext for pursuing further the accusation of espionage since he could say that since their father knew that espionage was a dangerous endeavor he kept one son behind with him in Canaan in order to guarantee the family's future if the brothers were caught and executed.

The prepositional phrase "in the land of Canaan" again reiterates their statement to Joseph in Genesis 42:7 and 13 of where they live and is necessary since as Hebrews they would have not worn the attire of the Canaanites.

Genesis 42:33

"The man, the lord of the land, said to us, 'By this I will know that you are honest men: leave one of your brothers with me and take grain for the famine of your households, and go.'"

At this point, the nine omit that they were imprisoned for three days by Joseph and in fact give their father the impression that Simeon was an honored guest and not a prisoner as indicated by their statement, "Leave one of your brothers with me." However, even though this statement misrepresents what really happened in Egypt it does reveal that the attitude of Jacob's sons towards him is now sensitive and no longer calloused. If you recall, Jacob's sons were very cruel and insensitive to their father when breaking the news of Joseph in that they sent messengers to their father, asking him to identify Joseph's blood spattered multicolored long-sleeved coat.

Genesis 42:34

"But bring your youngest brother to me that I may know that you are not spies, but honest men. I will give your brother to you, and you may trade in the land."

A comparison of Genesis 42:18-20 with 42:34 reveals that out of consideration for their father's feelings, the nine brothers change Joseph's threat of life and death to a promise that they could do business in the land of Egypt. Also, the brothers deliberately omit that the money of one of them had been returned.

Genesis 42:35

"Now it came about as they were emptying 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 dismayed.”

For the first time, all nine of the brothers discover that all of them had the silver returned to them, which they used to purchase grain from Joseph. Up to this point, Jacob probably believed his sons story, however, the discovery of the silver in the personal sacks of each one of them makes them look guilty. Jacob knew full well the character of his boys and that they were not always trustworthy as evidenced by their treachery at Shechem (See Genesis 34). The brothers were afraid because they looked guilty of stealing, which in turn they felt would cost them the life of Simeon.

Genesis 42:36

“Their father Jacob said to them, ‘You have bereaved me of my children: Joseph is no more, and Simeon is no more, and you would take Benjamin; all these things are against me.’”

The use of the name “Jacob” and not “Israel” in Genesis 42:29-38 is significant in that the former reflects character produced by the function of the power of the old Adamic sin nature whereas the latter reflects character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer.

The name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

“Israel” is the proper noun *yisra’el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed.

Just as the name “Jacob” reflects character produced by the function of the power of the old sin nature so the name “Israel” reflects character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer.

Jacob’s self-pity reveals that he is living in the power of the old sin nature rather than trusting in the promises of God and is thus living in a manner that is consistent with the meaning of his old name rather than his divine name.

Jacob’s statement “you have bereaved me of my children” hits closer to the truth than he realizes when he charges his sons with being the ones who cost him two children. It also reveals that he is involved in the blame game in that he blames them for the death of Joseph and now Simeon, which is a manifestation of the old sin nature. This charge must have pierced the already sensitive conscience of each of Jacob’s sons since they were guilty of selling Joseph into slavery in Egypt, which in turn has led to Simeon being imprisoned in Egypt.

Notice, that Jacob does not allow his sons to explain themselves but assumes their guilt because of the silver in each of their personal sacks. Therefore, we can see that up to this point in the narrative the brothers are drawing closer together in this adversity whereas Jacob is withdrawing from his sons.

His statement “Joseph is no more” reveals Jacob’s sons successfully deceived him into believing that Joseph had died from wild animals when he saw the bloodied long-sleeved multicolored tunic.

Jacob’s statement “Simeon is no more” expresses Jacob’s belief that Simeon would be executed when the authorities in Egypt discovered that the silver that his sons used to purchase grain from them was gone.

The statement “and you would take Benjamin” expresses Jacob’s feeling that because he has lost Joseph and Simeon that he anticipates losing Benjamin as well.

His statement “everything is against me” is self-pity and a manifestation that he is not walking by faith but by sight. This is indicated by his self-absorption where he is concentrating on the adverse circumstances rather than turning to God in prayer and appropriating the power of God by claiming the promises of God.

Jacob’s accusations against his sons indicate that he somehow sensed that it was by some fault on the part of his sons that Joseph and Simeon had died and that they likewise would be responsible for the death of Benjamin.

Bob Deffinbaugh, “In these chapters dealing with the life of Joseph, three different responses to adversity are seen. For Joseph, his suffering was ultimately from the hand of a loving heavenly

Father, Who was near in his affliction (cf. 39:23, 21-23; 40:8; 41:16,51-52). For his brothers, their adversity was punishment from an angry God, Who was getting even with them for their sin (42:21-22, 28). For Jacob, it was no more than the fickle hand of fate or, worse yet, the stupidity of his sons, that made his life miserable (42:36-38). And yet in every instance affliction was the gentle and gracious hand of God, drawing His sons closer to Himself” (The Book of Genesis, page 318; Biblical Studies, 1997).

Genesis 42:37

“Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, ‘You may put my two sons to death if I do not bring him back to you; put him in my care, and I will return him to you.’”

Reuben was the oldest son of Jacob and Leah and he proposes to his father that he will kill his two sons if he does not bring Benjamin back home alive to him. Even though Reuben’s proposal was well meaning, it was nevertheless irrational and ridiculous and idiotic since how would Jacob be consoled by the death of two of his grandsons and would simply add further to Jacob’s grief.

Genesis 42:38

“But Jacob said, ‘My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he alone is left. If harm should befall him on the journey you are taking, then you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.’”

Jacob refuses Reuben’s ridiculous proposal.

The use of the phrase “my son” rather than “your brother” and “his brother” rather than “your brother” in effect expresses Jacob’s denial of any fraternal relationship between the sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel.

The statement “he (Benjamin) alone is left” means that Benjamin is the only child of Rachel still alive, which we know of course, is not the case.

Jacob’s final statement “you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow” expresses his sentiment that Benjamin, Rachel’s second son, is now as precious to him as her first son, Joseph and reminds his sons of the grief they caused him by selling Joseph into slavery. He is saying in effect

that if Benjamin dies, then he will spend the rest of his days in sorrow.

“Sheol” is the noun *sh^e’ol* (lw)av+) (sheh-ole), which in the New Testament is called “Hades” and refers to one of four compartments called in Scripture “Paradise,” which prior to the resurrection of Jesus Christ contained the departed souls of believers.

Notice the contrast between the spiritual states of Jacob at this point in the narrative with that of his son Joseph. No wonder it fell to Joseph to function as head of the family so that a spiritual lesson would be learned and the faith of all in the family would be strengthened. Jacob’s self-absorption and self-centeredness produced in him an inability to see the hand of God in all of this, but it was there regardless.

Notice also that while affliction drew Joseph ever closer to God, Jacob withdrew from God and did not live by faith but by sight.

Genesis 43

Genesis 43 contains the record of the second journey of Joseph’s brothers to Egypt. Genesis 43-45 is a unit describing what happened when Joseph’s brothers returned to Egypt. Like chapter 42, which it echoes, it consists of seven scenes arranged “palistrophically” with the central scene being the arrest of Joseph’s brothers (44:1-13).

A Jacob sends his sons to Egypt (43:1-14).

B Arrival in Egypt; the steward and the brothers (43:15-25).

C Lunch with Joseph (43:26-34)

D The brothers arrested (44:1-13).

C Joseph’s self-disclosure (44:14—45:15)

B Departure from Egypt; Pharaoh and the brothers (45:16-24)

A Jacob receives his sons’ report (45:25-28)

Genesis 43 is divided into three sections: (1) Jacob’s family holds negotiations to return to Egypt (Genesis 43:1-14) (2) Joseph’s brothers arrive in Egypt and have conversation with Joseph’s steward about the silver in their bags (Genesis 43:15-25) (3) Joseph has lunch with his brothers in his home (Genesis 43:26-34).

In this chapter, we will see that the famine forces the family to face the reality that they must return to Egypt in order to survive. We will also see Judah emerging a leader as he speaks wisely and boldly to his father, convincing him to release Benjamin. Judah risks his own family fortune and life to save the rest of his family and later on he will offer himself to Joseph as a slave for his brother Benjamin for the sake of his father (See Genesis 44:33-34).

This chapter begins and ends with Jacob giving instructions to his sons to return to Egypt to buy food. In this chapter, we see Joseph and his brothers moving closer to a reconciliation in that Joseph has his brothers over his house for lunch upon their return to Egypt with Benjamin. Joseph begins to drop his hard front and displays genuine hospitality to his brothers.

The brothers attempt to return their silver to Joseph's steward and once again in fulfillment of Joseph's prophecy contained in Genesis 37:5-11, they bow to Joseph.

Also, we will see Joseph becomes emotional at the sight of his only full brother, Benjamin. We will see that Joseph's emotions were bound up in his family and not in his Egyptian social position.

Therefore, in Genesis 43, we see Joseph's dysfunctional family moving towards reconciliation with Joseph being the instrument that God uses to bring this about and who is aware of himself as being at work in such capacity.

Genesis 43:1-10 records Judah negotiating with his father for a return to Egypt with Benjamin in order to secure the release of Simeon who was still imprisoned at the time in Egypt.

Genesis 43:1

“Now the famine was severe in the land.”

This statement is similar to the one in Genesis 41:57 and is a reference to the famine in the land of Canaan. Canaan experienced famine quite often since there was one in this land in the time of Abraham (See Genesis 12:10), there was one in the days of Isaac (See Genesis 26:1) and now a third in the time of Jacob. In fact, Stephen alludes to this famine in the days of Jacob in Acts 7:11, stating that there was great affliction, and the

patriarchs found no sustenance. The faith of each one of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was tested by famine.

The original Hebrew text of Genesis 43:1 is elliptical meaning that for emphasis, the author does not employ a copula such as “was” but rather the word is implied.

Also, in the Hebrew, we have a *waw* disjunctive construction meaning we have the conjunction *waw* followed by a noun and then a verb.

In our passage, we have the conjunction w^e ($W+$) (*waw*) followed by the noun *ra'av* (VU^*r^*) (*raw-awv*), which is in turn followed by the verb *hayah* (hy^*h^*) (*haw-yaw*), “was,” which is omitted because of the figure of ellipsis.

“Was” is the 3rd person feminine singular Qal perfect form of the verb *hayah*, which is the basic word for “being” and it can be translated “to be, to become, to exist, to happen, to have.” The Qal stem is “stative” and the perfect tense of *hayah* refers to the present state of the land of Canaan, which is the result of a preceding situation, namely, the famine.

This *waw* disjunctive construction expresses a contrast rather than a transition, which the New American Standard erroneously does by translating this construction with the word “now.”

If the disjunctive w^e is used in a situation with continuity of setting, the clause it introduces may contrast with the preceding, specify contemporary circumstances, or causes, or provide a comparison. In our passage, this *waw* disjunctive construction expresses a contrast between Jacob's negative attitude in which he refuses to send his sons back to Egypt with Benjamin with the reality of the famine being severe in Canaan, which will ultimately force Jacob to send his sons back to Egypt with Benjamin.

The combination of the connective *waw* and a nominal form (as opposed to a finite verb) plus Qal perfect form of the verb *hayah*, “became” indicates contrast in Hebrew, that is to say, much more of a “but, however” than an “and.”

We will translate *waw* with the English “however” rather than “but” since the English “but” marks an opposition or contrast though in a causal way

whereas the English “however” indicates a less marked opposition, but displays a second consideration to be compared with the first.

Here in Genesis 43:1 Moses under the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit employs the *waw*-disjunctive construction in order to indicate a second consideration that is to be compared with the statement made in Genesis 42:38, therefore we will translate the disjunctive use of the conjunction *waw*, “however.”

Therefore, we could translate Genesis 43:1, “however, the famine became severe in the land.”

Genesis 43:2

“So it came about when they had finished eating the grain which they had brought from Egypt that their father said to them, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’”

The grain supply that the brothers bought in Egypt was being depleted, leaving only enough food to enable their families to survive while they returned to Egypt and back. The famine became so severe that Jacob was forced to send his sons back to Egypt when the grain they bought in Egypt was nearly exhausted. He gave this order to his sons knowing full well that his sons had already emphasized with him that if his beloved son Benjamin was not with them when they returned to Egypt, then, not only would Simeon be executed but they all would as spies.

Jacob takes the initiative and exercises his authority in the family by giving the order to his sons to go back to Egypt. However, he only orders his sons back to Egypt when the situation in Canaan had reached crisis proportions. The fact that Jacob puts off the decision to send his sons to Egypt serves as an illustration of leadership very poorly exercised.

His statement “Go back, buy us a little food” expresses his sentiment that the famine will only last a little while longer, which was not to be the case.

Genesis 43:3

“Judah spoke to him, however, saying, ‘The man solemnly warned us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

Genesis 43:4

“If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food.”

Genesis 43:5

“But if you do not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You will not see my face unless your brother is with you.’”

“Judah” (hd*Why+) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “I will praise the Lord” according to Genesis 29:35 and the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature descended from him.

Hebrews 7:14, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.”

In Genesis 37 we saw that in an attempt to save Joseph’s life, Judah proposed to his brothers that they sell Joseph to the Midianites. Then, in Genesis 38, we saw his great failure with Tamar where he left his brothers at Dothan, and spent time with a heathen named Hirah and married an unbelieving Canaanite and had three children with her, two of which were killed by the Lord for their involvement with evil. Judah failed to provide their widow Tamar his third son Shelah to carry on the line of the two deceased brothers because of his fear that he would die as well. This resulted in Tamar disguising herself as a temple prostitute and deceiving Judah to solicit her unknowingly, which resulted in her getting pregnant through him and she bore him twins, Zerah and Perez, the latter was in the line of Christ.

In our passage, we see that Judah has grown up quite a bit spiritually and has now assumed the leadership position over his brothers and will maintain that leadership position from this point on (See Genesis 44:14-34; 46:28).

“The man” is a reference to Joseph, which of course at this point in the narrative, Judah and his brothers fail to recognize.

Joseph is referred to as “the man” and his brothers “the men” in Genesis 43 and 44 in order to build the suspense in the narrative as events move towards a climax when Joseph’s identity will finally be revealed to his brothers and he is reconciled to his brothers.

“Your brother” is a reference to Joseph’s lone full brother, Benjamin, the second son of Jacob and Rachel.

Out of concern for his father’s feelings, Judah tactfully paraphrases Joseph’s statement recorded in Genesis 42:18-20 by making the statement, “You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.”

In Genesis 42:18-20, Joseph warned Judah and his brothers that if Benjamin was not with them when they return to Egypt, they were dead men. Joseph’s brothers had intended to return to Egypt with Benjamin. However, their father prohibited them from doing so. It was not until their grain had virtually run out that Jacob face up to the matter.

Judah omits the fact that Joseph would execute him and his brothers as spies if they did not have Benjamin with them when they returned to Egypt at a later date. He is making clear to his father that the prime minister of Egypt, who they didn’t know was Joseph, was not someone you messed with. He shows the proper respect for his father and his patriarchal authority but also conveys to his father a definitive condition to match his father’s previous refusal. Judah is actually helping his father make an inevitable decision of releasing Benjamin to him and his brothers to take Benjamin back with them to Egypt.

Genesis 43:6

“Then Israel said, ‘Why did you treat me so badly by telling the man whether you still had another brother?’”

For the first time since Genesis 37, Jacob is referred to as “Israel,” which signifies that he is no longer walking by sight and totally driven by the old sin nature whose character is reflected in the name “Jacob.” But rather, he is beginning to walk again by faith and appropriating the power of God by claiming the promises of God, which is reflected in the name “Israel.” Therefore, it appears that Israel/Jacob knew full well when he gave orders to his sons to go back to Egypt and buy food that he would have to send Benjamin with them since he was warned that they could not return to Egypt without Benjamin.

Although he presents a brief complaint to his sons about offering more information than they needed to convey to the lord of Egypt, Jacob/Israel eventually agrees to allow Benjamin to return to Egypt with the rest of his sons, which demonstrates his faith that the Lord will protect Benjamin.

Genesis 43:7

“But they said, ‘The man questioned particularly about us and our relatives, saying, ‘Is your father still alive? Have you another brother?’ So we answered his questions. Could we possibly know that he would say, ‘Bring your brother down’?”

Notice how all Judah’s brothers back him up as indicated by the pronoun “they.” The brothers point out to their father that it was impossible to know, which way the conversation with the lord of Egypt would go.

Genesis 42:10-16 does not record Joseph putting forth these specific questions to his brothers but rather portrays them as volunteering the information. However, Genesis 44:19 confirms the honesty with which they speak to their father here in Genesis 43:7 since the former records them reminding the lord of Egypt that he had asked specifically if they had a father or another brother. Therefore, we can see that Genesis 42:13 is a summary or a general description of the conversation between Joseph and his brothers and thus, Genesis 43:7 and 44:19 gives us more details of this conversation. They felt that by being honest with the lord of Egypt and supplying details about their family background was the only way to clear them of the espionage charge. They sensed that the lord of Egypt wanted to know about their family in detail.

Genesis 43:8

“Judah said to his father Israel, ‘Send the lad with me and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, we as well as you and our little ones.’”

Without disrespecting his authority, Judah confronts his father with the reality that he has no alternative but to send Benjamin back with rest of his brothers to Egypt so that all three generations of their family will not die of starvation.

“Lad” is the noun *na`ar* (נָאֵר) (nah-ar), which refers to a male from infancy (Exodus 2:6) to marriage (Genesis 21:12, 17, 18; 34:19; 41:12). At this point in the narrative, Benjamin was more than twenty-two years of age since Benjamin was born before Joseph went down to Egypt.

Judah’s statement “that we may live and not die” is a double entendre referring to his father’s words recorded in Genesis 42:2 that they will die of starvation if his sons don’t buy food in Egypt and to Joseph’s threat to kill the brothers if Benjamin does not return with them (See Genesis 42:18-20, 34).

Three generations are included in the phrase “we as well as you and our little ones” thus indicating that Judah is appealing to his father’s paternal instincts.

Genesis 43:9

“I myself will be surety for him; you may hold me responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame before you forever.”

To emphasize the seriousness with which he is willing to assume responsibility of Benjamin, Judah uses two distinct legal idioms in the days of the patriarchs.

The Hebrew noun *`arav* (אַרַב) (aw-rav), which is translated “I myself will be surety” was often used in reference to the acceptance of legal responsibility for a debt contracted by another.

The guarantor may undertake to insure that the borrower will not disappear or he undertakes to repay the loan should the borrower default (Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary*, page 298, Jewish Publication Society).

Therefore, Judah’s promise to his father “I myself will be surety for him” means that he is guaranteeing the safety of Benjamin by pledging that he will give his life and forfeit his estate in order to protect Benjamin.

In contrast with Reuben’s offer to his father in Genesis 42 by putting the lives of his own sons on the line, Judah put his own life on the line. This is the second time that Judah overshadows his oldest brother Reuben as a leader (See Genesis 37:21-22; 37:26-27; 42:37; 42:8-10).

The second legal idiom is composed of the following: (1) Preposition *min* (/מִן) (min), “from” (2) 1st person common singular pronominal suffix meaning “my” (3) Noun *yadh* (יָד) (yawd), “hand” (4) The verb *baqash* (בָּקַשׁ) (baw-kash), “to require an accounting for.”

This second idiom is used with respect to bloodshed indicating that Judah will be held responsible and will be required to give an account if Benjamin dies.

Judah’s promise to his father “then let me bear the blame before you” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “I will have been guilty of sinning against you.”

In the Hebrew text, “forever” is composed of the adjective *kol* (כֹּל) (kole), “all” and articular plural form of the noun *yom* (יוֹם) (yome), “the days.”

Therefore, together these three words literally mean “all the days (of my life)” and not for all of eternity indicating Judah is promising his father that he will bear the personal guilt and blame “all the days of his life” if Benjamin dies.

“Then let me bear the blame” is the verb *chata* (חָטָא) (khaw-taw), which is in the qal stem and means, “to be guilty of a moral wrongdoing or sin,” which causes offense to another. Therefore, this verb indicates that Judah is saying to his father that if he does not bring Benjamin back to him alive, then he will have been guilty of sinning against his father and would also bear the personal guilt and shame as well.

Genesis 43:10

“For if we had not delayed, surely by now we could have returned twice.”

Judah bluntly reminds his father that if he had not procrastinated so long, they could have already made the trip to Egypt and back twice over.

In Genesis 43:11-14, we will see Israel operating in faith and agreeing to send Benjamin back to Egypt along with his other sons.

Genesis 43:11

“Then their father Israel said to them, ‘If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry

down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.”

Israel’s statement “if it must be so, then do this” expresses his agreement with his son Judah and his faith in the promises of God to protect him and his family.

Israel’s command “take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present” is an offer of restitution to the lord of Egypt since the silver, which his sons used to purchase grain from him had somehow been returned and so as to make amends for what might be construed as a crime, he offers this gift as restitution.

“Present” is the noun *minchah* (h^j*n+m!) (min-khaw), which denotes not only a gift given with the intent to please the lord of Egypt but also, is restitution.

This same word appears four times in Genesis 32:13-21 and once in Genesis 33:10 where it is used in the context of Jacob offering restitution to Esau for his deceiving their blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright upon him rather than Esau.

As we noted in our study of this encounter, Jacob was doing what was required of him under the circumstances since he had cheated and had been deceitful with Esau in the past and was offering restitution for his past conduct with Esau.

With the gift, Jacob was attempting to offer “restitution” to Esau and make amends for actions against Esau when he had deceived his blind father Isaac into bestowing the blessings of the birthright to him rather than Esau.

The doctrine of restitution was taught by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in Matthew 5:22-23 as well as in Leviticus 6:1-7 and was practiced by Zaccheus as recorded in Luke 19:8-10.

Just as Jacob offered restitution to Esau so he is offering restitution to the lord of Egypt since the silver with which his sons purchased grain from him had somehow been returned to them. Therefore, to make amends or to offer restitution for what could very easily be construed as a theft, Israel wisely offers restitution to the lord of Egypt.

Genesis 43:11

“Then their father Israel said to them, ‘If it must be so, then do this: take some of the best products of the land in your bags, and carry down to the man as a present, a little balm and a little honey, aromatic gum and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds.’”

“Balm” is the proper noun *tsori* (yrlx()) (tsor-ee), which is derived from an unused root *tsarah*, “to crack,” hence, “to leak,” “distillation.” It is applied to the *opobalsamum*, the balsam distilling from an unknown tree or fruit growing in Gilead of the Transjordan (cf. Ezekiel 27:17). This resin seems to have been widely associated with healing properties and soothed wounds and provided a pleasant aroma to counteract the smell of rotting flesh caused by such wounds.

“Honey” is the noun *d^evash* (vb^D+) (de-vash), which denotes the wild honey found in hollows of rocks (See Deuteronomy 32:13), in trees (See 1 Samuel 14:25-26), and in animal carcasses (See Judges 14:8). Of course, honey is the sweet-tasting product of bees, which were not domesticated until the Hellenistic period in Palestine (4th century B.C.) and so therefore, the honey of the Old Testament was wild.

Honey was the basic source of sweetening (See Exodus 16:31; Proverbs 24:13; 25:16), abundant and prized (See Psalm 19:10; 119:103; Proverbs 5:3; Song of Solomon 4:11), was an article of trade (See Ezekiel 27:17) and was thought to have medicinal qualities (See Proverbs 16:24). In the ancient world, it was considered a good gift (See 2 Samuel 17:29; 1 Kings 14:3; Jeremiah 4:18) and the Egyptians would be elated with it as a gift since it would be a delightful sweet during a famine.

“Aromatic gum” is the noun *nekho’th* (tak)n+) (nek-ohth), which refers to a rare spice, believed to be labdanum resin from the *Cistus*. The *Cistus* according to Encyclopaedia Britannica (1997) was “any of a genus of seventeen species of low to medium sized shrubs in the rock rose family.” This rare spice was used for perfumes, incense and as an expectorant meaning it promoted the secretion of fluid from the respiratory tract.

“Myrrh” is the proper noun *lot* (fO) (lote), which is a perfumed gum produced by the *Cistus incanus* and is called *ladanum* and was used for incense, perfume and as a stimulant and expectorant. The most common word for “myrrh” is *mor* (rm)) (more), which refers to the gum resin extracted from a number of species and was used as a perfume for embalming.

“Pistachio nuts” is the noun *botnim* (<ynlf+B*) (bot-neem), which is an oval shaped “nut” that comes from a tree resembling the terebinth and even today is still considered a delicacy in Egypt and Syria.

“Almonds” is the noun *shaqedh* (dq!v*) (shaw-kade), which emphasizes careful attention and preserving, thus the idea of watchfulness, which is basic to the root affords the key to the explanation of the Hebrew name for the almond tree.

Palestine is a land where the almond flourishes, whereas in Egypt it would appear to have been uncommon. Almonds are today esteemed a delicacy and are eaten salted or beaten into a pulp with sugar.

The almond is *Amygdalus communis*, a tree very similar to the peach and the common variety grows to the height of 25 feet and produces an abundant blossom which appears before the leaves. In Palestine this is fully out at the end of January or beginning of February and it is thus the harbinger of spring. This early blossoming is supposed to be the origin of the name *shaqedh* which contains the idea of “early.” Although the blossoms are tinged with pink, the general effect is white. The fruit is eaten in two stages, the first the tender, acidulous, unripe, crisp pod, and the other the ripe almonds, so familiar everywhere. The Hebrew name of the almond is the “waker,” in allusion to its being the first of the fruit trees to awake in the winter and put forth its luxuriant blossoms.

Genesis 43:12

“Take double the money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was a mistake.”

“Money” is the noun *keseph* ([s#K#) (keh-sef), which means, “silver” which in the Near East in the days of the patriarchs was used as a measure of value and was also a mark of wealth.

Israel’s command “Take double the money in your hand” is further restitution and would cover the silver found in the sacks plus the silver needed for the new purchase.

His next command “take back in your hand the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks” was not given to them by the Egyptians, neither was it stolen but rather it was given to them by Joseph out of love and to test the character of his brothers.

The statement “perhaps it was a mistake” reveals that Israel now had second thoughts about the guilt of his sons and is no longer walking in his flesh but rather walking by faith in the promises of God.

Genesis 43:13-14

“Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.”

“Your brother” is a reference to Joseph’s lone full brother, Benjamin, the second son of Jacob and Rachel and emphasizes his sons’ fraternal responsibilities in relation to him.

“Arise” is the verb *qum* (<Wq) (koom), which is an idiomatic expression describing a preparatory action needed to be taken so that a primary action can take place and involves preparation to change location as Israel commands ten of his sons to return to Egypt.

Israel’s statement “may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin” is a short prayer to the Father for the deliverance of his sons from the hand of the lord of Egypt.

The fact that Israel/Jacob was “not” paralyzed by fear but offered restitution and even prays indicates that he is not sinning but rather meeting his fear with practical common sense and appropriating the divine provision of prayer to

overcome his fear of losing Benjamin at the hands of the lord of Egypt.

Fear is not sin but becomes sin when we do not turn to God in prayer to overcome that fear and do not claim the promise of divine protection.

Israel/Jacob met his fear and anxiety with prayer and claimed the promises that God had made to him in the past of the divine presence, protection and prosperity.

Philippians 4:6, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

So to meet his fear of losing Benjamin, Israel asks God to deliver or rescue Benjamin and the rest of his sons from the lord of Egypt.

Psalms 31:2, "Incline Your ear to me, rescue me quickly; Be to me a rock of strength, a stronghold to save me."

The confession of sin to the Father is essential for our prayers to be heard since the Father will not hear our prayers if we are harboring any known sin in our stream of consciousness.

Psalms 66:18, "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear."

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

All prayer in the church age must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Eph. 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6).

Luke 11:2, "And He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Father, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come.'"

The believer is to pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ because it is through the merits of His impeccable Person and Finished Work on the Cross and Advocacy with the Father as well as the believer's union with Christ that gives the believer the privilege to boldly approach the throne of God in prayer.

John 16:23, "In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Praying in our Lord's name means that we are to pray to the Father consciously aware of our exalted position where we are seated at the Father's right hand because of our eternal union and identification with Christ.

Ephesians 2:6, "and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

Prayer must be made in the power of the Spirit or by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Jude 20, "But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying by means of the power of the Holy Spirit."

Prayer is asking for what God wants and must be according to His will in order to be effective and productive for God.

1 John 5:14, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us."

Answered prayer demands faith on the part of the believer (Mt. 17:20; Jam. 5:15).

Hebrews 11:6, "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

The faith of Israel in prayer would appropriate the omnipotence of God.

Matthew 17:20, "If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."

Notice how Israel in prayer appeals to the character and nature of God, namely he appeals to God's attributes of omnipotence and love.

"God Almighty" is composed of noun *`el* (la@), "God" and the noun *shadday* (yD^v^v) (shad-dah-ee), "almighty" and was first used by God of Himself when speaking to Abraham as recorded in

Genesis 17:1 and was used by Isaac when blessing Jacob as recorded in Genesis 28:3 and 35:11.

This title emphasizes the omnipotence of God, used in connection with His covenant promises to make Israel's family a great nation (See Genesis 17:1) and describes the Lord as being able to protect and deliver his sons from the hand of the lord of Egypt.

“Compassion” is the noun *rechem* (<j#r#) (rakh-am), which is a reference to the function of God's love that intensely desires to act to alleviate Israel's pain and suffering and removes its cause, which was the safety of Benjamin and his sons.

Psalm 116:5, “Gracious is the LORD, and righteous; Yes, our God is compassionate.”

The “other brother” is a reference to the second oldest son of Jacob and Leah, Simeon, who remained incarcerated in Egypt.

Israel's statement “And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved” is not a complaint but an expression of faith much like Job's statement upon hearing the news of the death of all his children in which he said, “The Lord gives and takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord” (See Job 1:21). Therefore, we see Israel appropriating by faith in prayer the omnipotence of God by claiming the covenant promises God gave him and appealing to the character and nature of God. He prayed that God would move the heart of the lord of Egypt and constrain him to return both Benjamin and Simeon to them again. If not, Israel was content to leave the matter with God who loved him and if he was to be deprived of his children, then it would have to be that way.

His statement “And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved” reveals that Israel has surrendered to the will of God.

Luke 22:42, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.”

As in the case with his encounter with Esau, Israel when dealing with the lord of Egypt has done everything that he could humanly do and now he simply trusted that the Lord would work circumstances out to fulfill His will. Israel is now operating in faith.

Faith produces courage whereas unbelief produces cowardice and so we see that Jacob's faith has produced courage in his soul. Biblical faith is trusting in the promises of God regardless of the circumstances or consequences and resting in them and is confident obedience to God's Word in spite of circumstances and consequences. The circumstances may be impossible, and the consequences frightening and unknown but we obey God's Word just the same and believe Him to do what is right and what is best.

Little did Israel know that the lord of Egypt was in fact, his beloved son Joseph. Not only would God answer his prayer for the deliverance of Benjamin and Simeon but he would also receive back his beloved Joseph, thus, fulfilling the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:20-21, “Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.”

Genesis 43:15-25 presents to us the account of Joseph's brothers arriving in Egypt with Benjamin and having a conversation with Joseph's house steward regarding the silver that was returned to them without their knowledge.

Genesis 43:15

“So the men took this present, and they took double the money in their hand, and Benjamin; then they arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.”

“The men” refers Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Reuben, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin.

The statement “They took double the money in their hand” was further restitution and would cover the silver found in the sacks plus the silver needed for the new purchase.

Genesis 43:16

“When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to his house steward, ‘Bring the men into the house, and slay an animal and make ready; for the men are to dine with me at noon.’”

The moment Joseph saw Benjamin he knew that his half-brothers had changed over the past twenty years like himself in that they did not treat his full brother Benjamin as they treated him twenty years before and thus they demonstrated to him that they were in fact what they claimed to be, namely, honest men. That Benjamin was alive coupled with the fact that they acknowledged their guilt in prison for their cruel treatment of himself twenty years before, convinced Joseph that a reconciliation with his brothers was indeed a real possibility. Therefore, he gave his house steward orders to prepare lunch for these ten Hebrew men, at which time he would join them.

Joseph does “not” make contact with his brothers as indicated in that the text says, he merely, “saw” them and then gave orders to his stewards to prepare a meal for him and his brothers at noon. Evidently, Joseph gave orders to his subordinates to keep an eye out for ten Hebrew men, who no one knew were in fact his brothers.

One can only imagine what Joseph must have felt when he saw his only full brother Benjamin for the first time in twenty years who was only a little child when Joseph was seventeen and sold into slavery.

Genesis 43:17

“So the man did as Joseph said, and brought the men to Joseph's house.”

Genesis 43:18

“Now the men were afraid, because they were brought to Joseph's house; and they said, ‘It is because of the money that was returned in our sacks the first time that we are being brought in, that he may seek occasion against us and fall upon us, and take us for slaves with our donkeys.’”

Joseph’s brothers concluded that Joseph’s invitation would enslave them and impound their possessions because they are singled out from the other buyers of grain. They also remember the lord of Egypt’s harsh treatment of them on their first journey as well as the silver returned to them without their knowledge, not to mention they still felt guilty over their cruel treatment of Joseph. They also probably knew that Egyptian officials

such as Potiphar as we have seen in the past, kept dungeons in the basement of their homes.

Genesis 43:19-21

“So they came near to Joseph's house steward, and spoke to him at the entrance of the house, and said, ‘Oh, my lord, we indeed came down the first time to buy food, and it came about when we came to the lodging place, that we opened our sacks, and behold, each man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full. So we have brought it back in our hand.’”

Genesis 43:22

“We have also brought down other money in our hand to buy food; we do not know who put our money in our sacks.”

“Sack” is the noun *ʾamtachath* (tj^ʾT^ʾm+a^ʾ) (am-takh-ath), which means, “pack” and was placed in the mouth of the personal sacks of the brothers and appears to have been much like a wallet.

In Genesis 42:25, “sack” is the noun *saq* (qC^ʾ) (sak), which denotes a thick coarse cloth, usually dark in color and made mostly from goat’s hair, although camel’s hair was sometimes used and refers to the personal sackcloth bags of the brothers and were distinct from the earthenware containers.

In Genesis 42:27, we read where one of the brothers found his silver in the mouth of his *ʾamtachath*, “pack” whereas in Genesis 42:35, all the brothers found their silver in their *saq*, “personal sackcloth bags.”

In Genesis 42:27, one of the brothers opened his *saq*, “personal sackcloth bag” and saw his silver in the mouth of his *ʾamtachath*, “pack.”

Therefore, it appears that the silver was placed in the *ʾamtachath*, “pack,” which went inside the *saq*, which was the “personal sackcloth bags” of the brothers.

The brothers concluded that the lord of Egypt was about to make them slaves and impound their animals because of their silver that was returned to them without their knowledge in their personal sacks since they had obeyed the lord of Egypt’s

command to bring Benjamin back. Therefore, they attempt to explain to Joseph's steward that they had not stolen the silver but rather that it was put back in the mouth of each of their packs without their knowledge and that they have brought it back with them in full.

The brothers use deferential language when speaking with Joseph's house steward as indicated by their use of the expression "my lord." So in desperation they took the steward aside to explain how they had found their money in their sacks and that they had brought it with them to repay it.

Genesis 43:23

"He said, 'Be at ease, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money.' Then he brought Simeon out to them."

"Be at ease" is composed of the noun *shalom* (<WLV^) (shaw-lome), "peace" is employed with preposition *l'* (l+) (lamed), "to" and the 2nd person masculine plural pronominal suffix, "all of you" and so therefore, this expression literally means, "peace to all of you."

In Genesis 43:23, the noun *shalom* refers to the absence of fear of the threat of harm, and thus a "sense of security." Therefore, the steward is saying to Joseph's brothers to not be fearful for their personal security or lives and gives the reason why, which is that God through the instrumentality of Joseph and his steward put their silver back in their sacks.

The steward's statement "Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks" marks a turning point in the relationship of Joseph and his brothers in that formerly the relationship was characterized by fear (See Genesis 42:21-22, 28, 35; 43:18) but now it will be marked by peace and reconciliation. This statement also implies that the steward himself has been evangelized by Joseph since he has knowledge of the God of Joseph and his brothers and therefore, knew that Joseph and these Hebrew men were brothers.

"Treasure" is the noun *matmon* (/omf+m^) (mat-mone), which refers any form of wealth, which is

hidden since the word is derived from *taman* (/m^f*) (taw-man), which means, "to hide."

The steward sought to calm their fears by assuring them that he had received the money for their grain as indicated by his statement "I had your money" but he deliberately failed to mention that it was he, under Joseph's orders, who also returned it.

The statement "I had your money" in the Hebrew text literally reads, "your silver came to me," which is a legal formula confirming receipt of full payment.

To further assure them, he brought out Simeon and returned him to them but this was only to lull them into a false sense of relief since Joseph tests the brothers one final time as recorded in Genesis 44. Therefore, we can see based upon a comparison of Joseph's actions recorded in Genesis 44 with the steward's actions here in Genesis 43 that the steward was privy to Joseph's plan with regards to his brothers and that Joseph and these Hebrew men were in fact brothers.

The narrator, which is Moses under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, links the restoration of Simeon to the restoration of the silver and not to the return of Benjamin, which indicates that Joseph placed the silver back in their sacks in order to test their honesty. The return of the silver in full demonstrated that they were indeed honest men and could be trusted by Joseph and thus reconciliation between them could take place.

Genesis 43:24

"Then the man brought the men into Joseph's house and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys fodder."

Genesis 43:25

"So they prepared the present for Joseph's coming at noon; for they had heard that they were to eat a meal there."

The brothers enter Joseph's house now that their worst fears have been relieved and are treated with the usual acts of hospitality for honored guests and for their part they prepare their gift of restitution for Joseph.

Undoubtedly, the brothers put a great deal of effort into the preparation and presentation of the gift since the return of the silver had not made the impression that they had hoped for indicating to them that everything was now riding on how they handled this luncheon with the lord of Egypt.

Next, we will study Genesis 43:26-28, which records the fulfillment of the second stage of Joseph's two prophetic dreams, recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. Joseph's two dreams, which are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11, predict his own career and the arrival of his entire family in Egypt to buy food and bow down to him as the prime minister of Egypt.

The dream/prophesy recorded in Genesis 37:5-11 was fulfilled in three stages: (1) Joseph's brothers bowed once to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt without Benjamin and Jacob (See Genesis 42:6). (2) With Benjamin but without Jacob, Joseph's brothers bowed down twice to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 43:26, 28). (3) All Joseph's brothers bow down to him along with his father Jacob (See Genesis 46:1-27).

Genesis 37:2-11

"These are the records of the generations of Jacob. Joseph, when seventeen years of age, was pasturing the flock with his brothers while he was still a youth, along with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives. And Joseph brought back a bad report about them to their father."

"Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a varicolored tunic."

"His brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers; and so they hated him and could not speak to him on friendly terms."

"Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more."

"He said to them, 'Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves

gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf."

"Then his brothers said to him, 'Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?' So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words."

"Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, 'Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.'"

"He related it to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, 'What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?'"

"His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying in mind."

Now, let's look at the fulfillment of the second stage of this prophecy.

Genesis 43:26

"When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present which was in their hand and bowed to the ground before him."

Genesis 43:27

"Then he asked them about their welfare, and said, 'Is your old father well, of whom you spoke? Is he still alive?'"

Genesis 43:28

"They said, 'Your servant our father is well; he is still alive.' They bowed down in homage."

The first time that Joseph's brothers bow down to him was an appropriate act of respect for a sovereign of a nation. The second time they bow was in appreciation for asking about their health and well-being as well as that of their father.

Undoubtedly, this second bow involved thanksgiving to God that the lord of Egypt did not speak harshly to them as he did the first time and did not imprison them because of the silver that was returned to them without their knowledge.

Psalm 107:1, "Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His lovingkindness is everlasting."

Psalm 118:21, "I shall give thanks to You, for You have answered me, and You have become my salvation."

Unknowingly, by bowing down to him, Joseph's eleven brothers fulfilled the second stage in the fulfillment of his prophetic dreams that he related to them at seventeen years of age, which are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. That all eleven of Joseph's brothers bowed down to him was according to Joseph's prediction in Genesis 37:5-11 and demonstrated that his two dreams were inspired by God and were a part of God's plan and sovereign will from eternity past. Therefore, these events were a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Jeremiah 1:12, that the Lord watches over His Word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:12, "Then the LORD said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.'"

It is also a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Isaiah 46:8-11 that the Lord will accomplish in time that which He has spoken and planned from eternity past.

Isaiah 46:9-11, "Remember the former things long past, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure.' Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of My purpose from a far country. Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it.'"

The fulfillment of the first and second stages of Joseph's two prophetic dreams was also a manifestation of the omnipotence of His Word.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

The fulfillment of the first and second stages of Joseph's two prophetic dreams teaches us that we must wait patiently upon God.

Hebrews 6:13-15, "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself saying, 'I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.' And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise."

Psalm 37:7, "Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him."

The fulfillment of the first and second stages of Joseph's two prophetic dreams teaches us that perseverance or endurance is essential in order to receive the fulfillment of God's promises. Perseverance is the capacity to continue to bear up under difficult circumstances. Joseph had to continue to bear up under the difficult circumstance of being enslaved in Egypt and unjustly imprisoned in order to finally receive the fulfillment of his two prophetic dreams that he would rule over his family.

Romans 5:3, "And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance."

The Scriptures are designed to produce perseverance in us and to encourage us.

Romans 15:4, "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

Many times, the two prophetic dreams gave encouragement to Joseph while in servitude and while imprisoned.

In Genesis 43:29-30, we will read where Joseph is overcome with emotion upon seeing his full brother Benjamin for the first time in over twenty years.

Genesis 43:29

"As he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, he said, 'Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?' And he said, 'May God be gracious to you, my son.'"

The statement “He (Joseph) lifted up his eyes and saw” brings the reader alongside of Joseph, capturing the scene for us, heightening the tension of the narrative, indicating the importance and magnitude of the moment. This statement also emphasizes the “providence of God,” which by way of definition, is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, this statement emphasizes that the reunion between Joseph and his lone full brother, Benjamin was not by chance or fate but was ordained to take place in time by God in the divine decree.

The phrase “his brother Benjamin, his mother’s son” emphasizes the special bond between Joseph and Benjamin in that they had the same mother, Rachel and thus Benjamin was Joseph’s only full brother.

Joseph’s only full brother was Benjamin since Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun had different mothers. The mother of Gad and Asher was Zilpah, Leah’s maid (See Genesis 30:9-13) and the mother of Dan and Naphtali was Bilhah, Rachel’s maid (See Genesis 30:1-8) and the mother of Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah (See Genesis 29:31-35), Issachar, and Zebulun was Leah (See Genesis 30:14-21).

Joseph asks his brothers the question, “Is this your youngest brother, of whom you spoke to me?” in order to continue to conceal his identity.

The statement “May God be gracious to you, my son” was the usual salutation in the east from the aged and superiors to the younger and inferiors, which, though very emphatic and expressive in ancient times, in the present day means no more than “I am very glad to see you.”

However, although this statement further concealed Joseph’s identity from his brothers, Joseph’s real intention for saying this to Benjamin was to express his desire that God would treat his lone full brother according to His grace policy by bestowing upon him unmerited blessings.

Grace is all that God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of

Christ and His death on the Cross-and our eternal union with Him. Grace is God treating us in a manner that we don’t deserve and excludes any human works in order to acquire eternal salvation or blessing from God. Grace means that God saved us and blessed us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do but rather saved us and blessed us because of the merits of Christ and His work on the Cross. Grace excludes any human merit in salvation and blessing (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5) and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none.

At this point in the narrative, Benjamin was more than twenty-two years of age since Benjamin was born before Joseph went down to Egypt.

Genesis 43:30

“Joseph hurried out for he was deeply stirred over his brother, and he sought a place to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there.”

Joseph hurries out of the room in order to continue to conceal his tears, which would have revealed his identity to his brothers. He continues to conceal his identity from his brothers since he must test the character of his brothers before there can be reconciliation.

“For” is the explanatory use of the conjunction *ki* (yK!) (kee), which introduces a subordinate clause that “explains” why Joseph hurried out of the room upon being seeing his lone full brother, Benjamin for the first time in over twenty years.

“He was deeply stirred over” is composed of the following: (1) Niphal (passive) form of the verb *kamar* (rm^K*) (kaw-mar), “to stir up” (2) 3rd person masculine singular pronominal suffix, “his” (3) Masculine plural noun *rechem* (<j#r#) (rakh-am), “affections.”

Therefore, Joseph left the room because his affections for Benjamin were stirred up when he saw him for the first time in over twenty years. The sight of Benjamin aroused overwhelming feelings of affection in Joseph, which can only be relieved through tears.

“Wept” is the verb *bakhah* (hk*B*) (baw-kaw), which refers to audible weeping.

Joseph’s emotional response expressed his relief that his lone full brother Benjamin was indeed still

alive and that his brothers did not kill him as they attempted to do to him over twenty years before.

Weeping is an emotion and emotion is the responder to what is in the mentality of the soul and so we see that Joseph's weeping is an expression of his emotion, which is the response to what was in the mentality of his soul, which was love for his brothers and gratitude towards the Lord.

The Lord Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:6) and before His entrance into Jerusalem to present Himself to the nation of Israel as Messiah (See Luke 19:41) and believers are commanded to weep with those who weep (See Romans 12:15).

If you recall in Genesis 42:24, Joseph wept upon hearing his brothers confess their guilt in their cruel treatment of him when he was seventeen years of age and which confession would lead to reconciliation with them. Altogether, we will see Joseph weep three times during this process of reconciliation with his brothers (See Genesis 42:24; 43:30; 45:1-2; 45:15).

Chuck Swindoll commenting on Joseph's tears, writes, "Can't you imagine the scene? All of a sudden, the handsome, bronzed leader of millions has rushed to his bedroom and collapsed in sobs. All those years passed in review. All the loneliness. All the loss. All the seasons and birthdays and significant occasions without his family. It was too much to contain, like a rushing river pouring into a lake, swelling above the dam. His tears ran and he heaved with great sobs. All of a sudden, he was a little boy again, missing his daddy" (Joseph: Man of Integrity and Forgiveness, page 127; W Publishing Group).

The Scriptures have much to say about our tears.

Ecclesiastes 3:4, "A time to weep and a time to laugh."

The Lord has a record of our tears.

Psalms 56:8, "You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?"

The apostle Paul wept and Timothy wept.

Acts 20:18-19, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with

you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews."

2 Corinthians 2:4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you."

2 Timothy 1:4, "longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy."

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ wept.

Hebrews 5:7, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety."

The Lord promises to wipe away all our tears.

Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces."

Luke 6:21, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."

Believers are commanded to weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

Joseph's weeping was not only an expression of his love and affection for his lone full brother, Benjamin but also an expression of gratitude towards the Lord for reuniting him with Benjamin.

Psalms 86:12, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever."

Psalms 106:1, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Hebrews 13:15, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to

God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”

Genesis 43:31

“Then he washed his face and came out; and he controlled himself and said, ‘Serve the meal.’”

After washing his face and composing himself, Joseph gives his servants orders to serve the meal. The last time Joseph’s brothers eat together was after they had thrown Joseph into a pit (See Genesis 37:24-25).

Genesis 43:32

“So they served him by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because the Egyptians could not eat bread with the Hebrews, for that is loathsome to the Egyptians.”

In accordance with the Egyptian culture and to further conceal his identity, Joseph ate at one table, his Egyptian servants at another, and his brothers at still another table, somewhat separate, yet in front of him.

Egyptians never eat at the same table with Hebrews since they were prejudiced towards them and in fact, the historians Diodorus, Herodotus and Strabo all attest to the fact that the Egyptians held all foreigners in contempt. Of course, the Egyptians knew that Joseph was a Hebrew and that he worshipped the Hebrews’ God, which was clearly expressed by Joseph when he first met Pharaoh and was appointed prime minister. However, as far as social customs were concerned, Joseph was “Egyptianized” meaning he possessed Egyptian citizenship and was Egyptian aristocracy by virtue of his Egyptian name and wife (See Genesis 41:41-45).

“Hebrew” is the proper noun *‘ivri (yr!b+u!)* (iv-ree), which first appears in Genesis 14:13 to describe Abraham as a legitimate and well-known descendant of Shem through Eber and was therefore, in the Messianic line, or the Promised Seed of Genesis 3:15.

The term “Hebrew” denotes the nationality of Joseph’s brothers and of course himself in contrast with the Egyptians and expresses the “xenophobia” of the Egyptians, which is an “unreasonable fear or hatred of foreigners or

strangers.” This racial bigotry that the Egyptians had towards the Israelites is illustrated in Genesis 43:32, which records that the Egyptians did not eat with the Hebrews since that was repulsive to them. The Egyptians were racially prejudiced towards the Hebrews since they considered themselves culturally and ethnically superior to the Hebrews. The Egyptians looked upon the profession of shepherding as repulsive and Israel’s form of worship as detestable (See Genesis 46:34; Exodus 8:26).

Joseph was served by himself because of his position as the prime minister of Egypt, second in authority to only Pharaoh. Notice that Joseph overlooks their prejudice and does not offend them by seating his brothers apart from them. Although the racial bigotry of the Egyptians was evil, God was able to use it to preserve the purity of the Israelite race and protect it from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

In Genesis 38, the story of Judah and Tamar emphasizes the need for God to temporarily relocate Jacob’s family to Egypt since spiritual purity was essential for the purposes of God to be realized. Judah, the son through whom the Messiah would be born (Genesis 49:8-12), was so cosmic and immoral that he was willing to marry a Canaanite woman, to have a Canaanite as his best friend and to become involved with prostitutes, leading to idolatry. The Lord had to do something drastic and the exile in Egypt was God’s remedy since the Egyptians detested Hebrew shepherds (See Genesis 43:32; 46:34), even if the Hebrews were to become involved with these people, the Egyptians would not even consider such a thing.

The racial bigotry of the Egyptians towards Hebrew shepherds would serve to maintain the Israelites as a separate people. Even though the Israelites exile in Egypt was in many respects a bitter experience for them, it was a gracious act on the part of God. Therefore, the divine rationale for the Lord for permitting Joseph to be sold into slavery in Egypt was to relocate his family so as to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

Unlike the Canaanites, the Egyptians would be unwilling to integrate with the Israelites and absorb them into their culture since they

considered their worship of God repulsive as well as the profession of shepherding. The segregated culture of the Egyptians guaranteed that the embryonic nation of Israel could develop into a great nation within the Egyptian borders.

Genesis 43:33

“Now they were seated before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth, and the men looked at one another in astonishment.”

Genesis 43:33 describes for us that Joseph seated his brothers by order of seniority, from the firstborn, who was Reuben to the youngest, who was Benjamin.

The order in which Israel/Jacob’s twelve boys were born, is as follows: (1) Reuben (2) Simeon (3) Levi (4) Judah (5) Dan (6) Naphtali (7) Gad (8) Asher (9) Issachar (10) Zebulun (11) Joseph (12) Benjamin.

Genesis 29:31-35 records that Jacob and Leah had Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah. Genesis 30:1-8 records Jacob and Rachel’s maid, Bilhah, then had Dan followed by Naphtali. Genesis 30:9-13 records that Jacob and Leah’s maid, Zilpah then had Gad followed by Asher. Genesis 30:14-21 records that Jacob and Leah then had Issachar, Zebulun and Jacob’s only daughter Dinah. Genesis 30:22-24 records Jacob and Rachel having their first child together, Joseph and Genesis 35:16-20 records bearing Jacob a second son, Benjamin.

That Joseph seated his brothers in order of seniority caused his brothers to look at one another in amazement since they could not understand how a stranger as the lord of Egypt could know the order in which they were born. Of course, they did not know that the lord of Egypt was in fact Joseph.

Henry M. Morris writes, “If this were a mere coincidence, it was indeed marvelous. One can easily show (merely by multiplying together all the numbers from one through eleven) that there are no less than 39,917,000 different orders in which eleven individuals could have been seated! Thus, for the servants to select the one correct order by chance was almost impossible. The odds were 40 million to one against it” (The Genesis Record, page 610, Baker Book House).

Undoubtedly, the brothers saw the providence of God when Joseph seated them in this manner and it caused them great joy as manifested in that they ate and drank the rest of the evening with Joseph who they knew as only the lord of Egypt.

Genesis 43:34

“He took portions to them from his own table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. So they feasted and drank freely with him.”

Joseph tests his half-brothers once again to see whether this obvious preferential treatment would arouse their envy or expose any bitter feelings that they might harbor against the one who is now their father’s favorite. Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.

Jealousy originated in eternity past with Satan since he was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ’s relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic since it is Satanic viewpoint.

If you recall, in Genesis 37, we saw that Joseph’s brothers were jealous of him because their father showed preferential treatment to Joseph by giving him a long-sleeved multicolored coat.

Bruce K. Waltke writes, “To be invited to a meal with a high official assumes a close relationship with him, but it is fraught with the potential for promotion or rejection. Proverbs 23:1-3 instructs the wise son not to be distracted by the official’s food; the guest’s character is either intentionally or unwittingly under surveillance by the higher official” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 557, Zondervan).

Proverbs 23:1-3, “When you sit down to dine with a ruler, consider carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for it is deceptive food.”

The statement “they feasted and drank freely” in the original Hebrew text literally reads, “they drank and they became drunk” with him.

“They feasted” is the verb *shathah* (ht*v*) (shaw-thaw), which means, “to drink alcoholic beverages.”

“Drank freely” is the verb *shakhar* (rk^v*) (shaw-kar), which means, “to drink enough to be satisfied” or as we say in the 21st century, “to put a buzz on.”

Therefore, we can see from the original Hebrew text that Joseph did “not” get drunk with his brothers but rather they drank enough so as to be content and satisfied or in other words, they drank enough alcoholic beverages to put a buzz on.

The brothers would never get drunk at the table of the lord of Egypt who had given them so much trouble up to this point and questioned their integrity.

A number of passages warn against the dangers of drunkenness since it causes people to stagger (Ps. 107:27; Prov. 23:34), it makes them sick (Is. 28:8; Jer. 25:27), it makes the eyes red (Prov. 23:29), it puts a person into a stupor (Jer. 51:39, 57), it makes a person poor (Prov. 23:21), it interferes with a leader’s work (Prov. 31:4f).

The foolishness of drunkenness is shown by the examples of Noah (Gen. 9:21), Lot (Gen. 19:31-38), Nabal (1 Sam. 25:36-39), David (2 Sam. 11:13), Absalom (2 Sam. 13:28) and Belshazzar (Dan. 5:2).

The Bible does “not” prohibit drinking alcohol but it “does” prohibit drunkenness.

Ephesians 5:18, “And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit.”

Believers are not to associate with believers who are drunks (1 Cor. 5:9-11). Drunkenness is a manifestation of the old Adamic sin nature (Gal. 5:19-21).

The fact that the brothers partied with each other and with Joseph demonstrated that the brothers were not jealous of Benjamin for receiving preferential treatment from the lord of Egypt since they would not have been able to enjoy the banquet. Therefore, Joseph enjoyed the banquet with his brothers since he could see there was no longer a spirit of jealousy among his half-brothers

and they could enjoy the banquet because they were cleared of all espionage charges.

Genesis 44

Genesis 44:1-45:15 records one of the most dramatic and beautiful scenes in all of the Word of God, namely, in this passage, we see Joseph testing the integrity of his brothers one final time and finally revealing his true identity to his brothers and reconciling with them. Genesis 44:1-44:15 is divided into three sections: (1) Joseph tests the integrity of his brothers (Genesis 44:1-13). (2) Joseph tests Judah’s integrity (Genesis 44:14-34). (3) Joseph reveals his true identity to his brothers and reconciles with them (Genesis 45:1-15).

In Genesis 44:1-13, the tension of the narrative builds with Joseph testing his brothers one final time by putting his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack and directing his steward to make accusations against them of ingratitude and theft and the brothers respond rashly if one is found guilty.

Genesis 44:1-2

“Then he commanded his house steward, saying, ‘Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his money for the grain.’ And he did as Joseph had told him.”

While Joseph’s brothers are sleeping off the effects of the alcohol they drank that night at the banquet, Joseph is plotting to frame his brother Benjamin in order to test his brothers’ integrity one final time. Up to this point in the narrative, Joseph’s brothers have recognized the providence of God in their lives and have expressed regret regarding their actions against Joseph twenty years before. They have also demonstrated their honesty by producing Benjamin and therefore, have not harbored ill will towards him as they had Joseph. However, up to this point, Joseph is not convinced that the character of his brothers has truly been transformed by God and that they have changed in their attitudes.

Joseph has not revealed his identity to his brothers at this point since he is not convinced that if his

brothers were faced with the same set of circumstances as when they mistreated him that they would act differently. Therefore, Joseph recreates what took place between him and his brothers twenty years before in order to test to see whether or not they have truly been changed by God and would if given the chance again, not repeat the same crime.

Joseph wanted to discover if his brothers would sell their father's favorite and Rachel's son, Benjamin as a slave as they had sold him who also was his father's favorite and Rachel's son. He also wanted to know if they would again treat their father insensitively as they did when informing him of his demise twenty years before by letting Benjamin remain in slavery as they did with him. In effect, Joseph wanted to know what they would do if forced to choose between their own personal welfare and that of Benjamin and their father. Joseph wanted to put Benjamin in a difficult situation in order to see how far his brothers would go in risking their own necks to seek his deliverance.

Joseph issues three orders to his steward: (1) "Fill the men's sack with food, as much as they can carry" (2) "Put each man's money in the mouth of his sack" (3) Put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest and his money for the grain."

First of all, he gives orders to fill each of his brothers' sacks with as much food as they can hold, and not just what they paid for but more, which would be noticed by the brothers and would lull them into having a false sense of security. By generously supplying his brothers with more grain than they paid for, Joseph will make his brothers' "ingratitude" appear all the greater when they are apprehended for alleged theft (Nahum Sarna, JPS Torah Commentary, page 303, Jewish Publication Society).

The second order issued by Joseph to his steward was a repetition of a previous scheme of his, which we saw in Genesis 43, where he gives orders to place the silver that his brothers used to purchase grain from him back in the mouth of each of their sacks so as to make them look guilty of theft. This order would have a two-fold effect upon Joseph's brothers in that not only would it

renew their sense of guilt but also would reinforce the steward's earlier statement that God was working on their behalf.

The third and final order given to the steward was to "plant" Joseph's silver cup in Benjamin's sack and place his money as well in the mouth of his sack as a ruse to test the brothers' integrity.

The "silver cup" was Joseph's drinking vessel, which he identifies to his brothers in Genesis 44:5 as a cup he used for divination, and which identification was a trick to test the integrity of his brothers.

The cup is identified for us as "silver" not to merely emphasize its value since the theft of it would have been wrong no matter what the cup was composed of but rather the word is used to recall Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver.

Joseph plants his silver cup in Benjamin's sack since he is attempting to recreate the circumstances, which led to his being sold for twenty pieces of silver. Like Joseph, Benjamin is the son of Rachel and his father's favorite. By planting the silver cup in Benjamin's sack, the brothers are faced again with a situation of whether or not to abandon a son of Rachel and their father's favorite.

All three of these orders that Joseph gave to his steward were to test the genuineness of his brothers' character transformation.

Genesis 44:3

"As soon as it was light, the men were sent away, they with their donkeys."

As the brothers were leaving for Canaan, they must have been overjoyed that not only did they have Benjamin and Simeon with them to return to their father but also, the lord of Egypt treated them very well whereas previous to this trip he had treated them harshly. However, little did they know that the hardest part of this latest journey to Egypt was about to take place.

Genesis 44:4-5

"They had just gone out of the city, and were not far off, when Joseph said to his house steward, 'Up, follow the men; and when you

overtake them, say to them, ‘Why have you repaid evil for good? Is not this the one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination? You have done wrong in doing this.’”

Genesis 44:6

“So he overtook them and spoke these words to them.”

The accusation “Why have you repaid evil for good” is designed to produce the maximum amount of anxiety in the brothers. By making this accusation, Joseph is saying in effect, “I treated you as guests and gave you more grain than you paid for, out of the goodness of my heart and now you have repaid me by stealing from me.”

The statement “Is not this one from which my lord drinks and which he indeed uses for divination” assumes that the brothers know what the steward is talking about without actually mentioning the cup, but of course, they have no clue.

The use of the pronoun “this one” without reference to any antecedent would indicate to the brothers that the steward believed they knew full well what they had stolen.

Joseph was well-known to possess prophetic insight and the brothers had experienced it when they were seated at the banquet in the order of seniority. The inference seems to be that the Egyptians attributed Joseph’s prophetic ability to his cup of divination and that this cup was an object coveted by many and now here are the brothers stealing this gift for themselves. Of course, Joseph did “not” practice divination since it was outlawed among God’s covenant people but rather it was simply a part of his scheme to test the integrity of his brothers. He wanted to continue to disguise himself as simply the lord of Egypt and not their long lost brother whom they sold into slavery over twenty years before.

“Divination” was the art of obtaining secret knowledge, especially of the future, and is a pagan counterpart of prophecy. The Scriptures teach that divination is inspired by the kingdom of darkness whereas genuine prophecy is by the Spirit of God, thus the Scriptures prohibit divination (See Deuteronomy 18:10-12).

Divination presumes that other spiritual forces control the world and are therefore not under God’s sovereign authority and was prohibited in Israel since it causes people to trust in evil demonic forces instead of trusting in God.

Among the Egyptians this sort of divination consisted of pouring clean water into a cup and then looking into the water for representations of future events, or in pouring water into a cup or dish, dropping in pieces of gold or silver or precious stones, and then observing and interpreting the appearance of the water. Melted wax was also poured into the water and the will of the gods interpreted by the variously shaped figures formed in this way.

Genesis 44:7-9 records the brothers’ response to Joseph’s accusations.

Genesis 44:7

“They said to him, ‘Why does my lord speak such words as these? Far be it from your servants to do such a thing.’”

Genesis 44:8

“Behold, the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks we have brought back to you from the land of Canaan. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord’s house?”

Genesis 44:9

“With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord’s slaves.”

The brothers vehemently protest their innocence in emphatic terms by pointing to their past conduct in that they returned their money on their previous trip. The brothers’ promise recorded was not only rash but foolish since the contents of their sacks had surprised them previously.

It is interesting that years earlier Laban had searched through Jacob’s possessions for his teraphim that remained hidden in Rachel’s tent and Jacob had pronounced a death sentence on the guilty person (See Genesis 31:23, 25, 33, 35).

Now the Egyptians searched for Joseph’s cup of divination and found it in the sack of Benjamin, Rachel’s son and the brothers here also pronounced a death sentence on the guilty person.

However, the brothers' rash oath also more importantly demonstrates that the brothers accept the principle of collective responsibility.

Genesis 44:10

“So he said, ‘Now let it also be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and the rest of you shall be innocent.’”

Joseph's steward brushes aside the brothers' rash oath and did not hold them to it but simply stated that the “guilty” person would become a slave. Therefore, we can see that Joseph had set his brothers up with a perfect excuse to abandon Benjamin and free themselves from slavery.

Genesis 44:11

“Then they hurried, each man lowered his sack to the ground, and each man opened his sack.”

Genesis 44:12

“He searched, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest, and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack.”

Genesis 44:13

“Then they tore their clothes, and when each man loaded his donkey, they returned to the city.”

The brothers hurry to open their sacks in order to rid themselves of this accusation as soon as possible, which demonstrates their conviction that they are innocent of the charges made against them.

The comment “beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest” heightens the tension of the narrative for the reader. The steward knows the ages of all the brothers because of the banquet the night before.

The narrator does not mention the silver planted in the mouth of the sacks of each of the brothers because it is inconsequential to the reconciliation of the brothers. The silver cup in Benjamin's sack is more important since Joseph is testing the attitude of the brothers towards Benjamin.

Notice the reaction of the brothers in that they do not even consider the possibility that they have been set up and do not consider for one moment

that Benjamin was in fact guilty but rather this situation caused them to believe that God was dealing with them again for their treatment of Joseph.

Also, notice that the brothers say nothing but their actions speak louder than words in that when Joseph disappeared, only their father tore his clothes in grief but now all of the brothers do so, which expresses their unity. Their collective expression of grief confirms their character transformation and demonstrates their affection for both Benjamin and their father.

In the days of the patriarchs, tearing one's clothing was a sign of great personal distress and here it expresses emotional distress of all the brothers when the silver cup was found in Benjamin's sack. They were upset at the prospect of having to turn Benjamin over to the Egyptians and return to their father and break his heart.

That they all returned with Benjamin to the city reveals that they did not abandon Benjamin, which demonstrates that they have passed the first part of Joseph's test. Had the brothers acted only in self-interest, they would have condemned Benjamin as a thief, deserted him, and fled from Egypt as quickly as possible. However, these were not the same men that had determined to do away with Joseph at Dothan (See Genesis 37).

More than twenty years had passed since they had sold Joseph into slavery, and yet it was as though they were reliving the event in the person of Benjamin. In the past, they had resented the favoritism their father showed to Joseph (See Genesis 37:4) just as Benjamin was their father's favorite (See Genesis 44:27-31). When they sold Joseph into slavery and were far from the watchful eye of their father, they attempted to kill Joseph violently (See Genesis 37:20) and then to starve him to death in a pit (See Genesis 37:22), and then finally to sell him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver (See Genesis 37:26-28).

Now they were faced with a similar situation, which was orchestrated by Joseph himself. Benjamin, Jacob's favorite, was in their care, far from their father's protection and was accused of a crime for which there was no opportunity to establish his innocence. They, without any real guilt, such as they deserved before, could merely

choose to walk away and enjoy their freedom at Benjamin's expense. They could return to their father just as they had done so long ago and break his heart with the news that his other son was dead.

More than twenty years later, the same temptation faces these men. Will they manifest a change of heart, or will they act in self-interest? This is what Joseph is trying to determine by testing his brothers again.

In Genesis 44:18-34, Judah offers himself to Joseph in place of Benjamin. But before offering himself to Joseph in place of Benjamin, we see in Genesis 44:14-17 that Judah admits to Joseph on behalf of his brothers that they are guilty of selling Joseph into slavery twenty years before.

Genesis 44:14

“When Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, he was still there, and they fell to the ground before him.”

Undoubtedly, Joseph was overjoyed and filled with thanksgiving to God that all of his brothers were returning with Benjamin.

Notice that Judah has taken the lead since he promised his father to take personal responsibility for the safety of Benjamin.

Once again, the brothers prostrate themselves before Joseph, which was a fulfillment of the second stage of Joseph's two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11. The dream/prophesy recorded in Genesis 37:5-11 was fulfilled in three stages: (1) Joseph's brothers bowed once to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt without Benjamin and Jacob (See Genesis 42:6). (2) With Benjamin but without Jacob, Joseph's brothers bowed down twice to honor him while he was prime minister of Egypt (See Genesis 43:26, 28; 44:14). (3) All Joseph's brothers bow down to him along with his father Jacob (See Genesis 46:1-27).

The fact that the brothers fell to the ground was not only an act of respect for a sovereign but also an expression of desperation and a plea for mercy.

Genesis 44:15

“Joseph said to them, ‘What is this deed that you have done? Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?’”

Joseph accuses the brothers sharply for the alleged theft of his silver cup since the day before he had treated them graciously, thus making the brothers look ungrateful by stealing his silver cup. He feigns indignation and addresses his brothers collectively and accuses them of all being involved in the theft and not just Benjamin.

The question “Do you not know that such a man as I can indeed practice divination?” means that the brothers should have known that a man like him could practice divination to discover what happened to his silver cup. The brothers are powerless to prove their innocence and are at the mercy of the lord of Egypt since they have means to demonstrate their innocence.

Genesis 44:16

“So Judah said, ‘What can we say to my lord? What can we speak? And how can we justify ourselves? God has found out the iniquity of your servants; behold, we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found.’”

Judah takes the leadership role by acting as the spokesman for all his brothers and makes three points. The first point is that the brothers' are innocent of stealing the lord of Egypt's silver cup as expressed in the statement “how can we justify ourselves,” which in the original Hebrew text reads, “how can we prove our innocence?”

“How can we justify ourselves?” is composed of the interrogative *mah* (חמ*) (maw), “how” and the 1st person common plural hithpael imperfect form of the verb *tsadheq* (צדח*) (tsaw-dak), which means, “to be innocent.”

The New American Standard translation makes it appear that Judah is stating that the brothers can not justify their theft of the silver cup but the original text says that Judah is complaining that he can not demonstrate their innocence. The NIV correctly translates this Hebrew expression, “How can we prove our innocence?”

Judah's statement “How can we prove our innocence?” expresses Judah's frustration that the

circumstantial evidence against them is so overwhelming that they find it useless to attempt to defend themselves as expressed by the statements, "What can we say to my lord? What can we speak?"

The statement "God has found out the iniquity of your servants" contains Judah's second point in which he expresses his conviction that their dilemma is the result of God's judgment for selling Joseph into slavery years before.

The statement "God has found out the iniquity of your servants" is "not" a confession of guilt in the theft of the silver cup since Judah has already stated their innocence. But rather, the statement is a reference to the crime the brothers committed against Joseph when he was seventeen years of age since it implies that their crime was kept secret to men but known to God. Therefore, this statement is an admission of guilt before God that they were wrong in their cruel treatment of Joseph, which reveals that the brothers had been burdened for over twenty years with guilt.

The solution to a guilty conscience is the confession of sin to God the Father, followed by obedience to the Word of God, which constitutes "repentance."

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

1 John 2:5, "But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him."

The presence of the silver cup in Benjamin's sack and their inability to clear themselves of the charges awakened the conscience of each of the brothers to the extent that they now realized that God was dealing with them for their treatment of Joseph. Their distress was a manifestation that they have reaped what they have sowed in that they were reaping distress in their own souls because they sowed distress in the soul of Joseph.

Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."

Therefore, Judah is admitting to the lord of Egypt, who is Joseph, that although they were innocent of the theft of his silver cup, they were in fact guilty of a crime they committed against Joseph over twenty years before, which is the second time that they admit their guilt in Joseph's presence (See Genesis 42:21).

The fact that Judah would admit their crime against Joseph to the lord of Egypt indicates that he and his brothers believed that in some way, the lord of Egypt was acting as God's agent in dealing with them.

Since Judah and his brothers were guilty of a crime of selling Joseph into slavery twenty years before, he states that it is only justice that they should be made slaves.

The statement "behold we are my lord's slaves, both we and the one in whose possession the cup has been found" contains Judah's third point and expresses the solidarity of the brothers in that they will not abandon Benjamin, if Benjamin has to stay as a slave in Egypt, then they all will become slaves.

Genesis 44:17

"But he said, 'Far be it from me to do this. The man in whose possession the cup has been found, he shall be my slave; but as for you, go up in peace to your father.'"

By asserting that only Benjamin will remain as his slave, Joseph is testing Judah's last statement that he and his brothers will not abandon Benjamin in Egypt but will become slaves as well, which is the final test of his brothers' integrity. If they accept Joseph's offer, they fail the test but if they refuse, then they have passed it since twenty years before they had abandoned Joseph.

The brothers are confronted with several agonizing decisions in that they can save their own lives at the expense of Benjamin but if they remain loyal to him, then their father and their families would die of starvation at the expense of their loyalty to Benjamin. As we will see, Judah solves the problem by offering himself in the place of

Benjamin so that his brothers can bring back food to their starving families.

This encounter between Joseph and his brothers has now reached its climactic moment in that they are confronted with a decision to accept Joseph's offer and abandon Benjamin in Egypt and break their father's heart again or to reject it and remain loyal to Benjamin.

Next, we come to the longest speech recorded in the book of Genesis in which Judah makes an impassioned plea to the lord of Egypt. In Genesis 44:18-34, Judah appeals to Joseph to release Benjamin, offering himself in place of Benjamin so as to not break his father's heart. This speech is divided into three parts: (1) Judah recounts the two previous journeys to Egypt (See Genesis 44:18-29) (2) Judah emphasizes the adverse impact on his father if Benjamin is enslaved in Egypt (See Genesis 44:30-32) (3) Judah offers himself as a slave in the place of Benjamin (See Genesis 44:33-34).

In this speech, Judah never mentions the theft of the silver cup or of the innocence or guilt of the accused but rather appeals to Joseph's sense of fairness and mercy by making mention of his father repeatedly and was designed to impress Joseph with the speaker's noble sacrifice. Therefore, let's look at Genesis 44:18-29, which contains the first part of Judah's speech, in which Judah recounts for Joseph the two previous journeys that he and his brothers made to Egypt, which is recorded Genesis 44:18-29.

Genesis 44:18

“Then Judah approached him, and said, ‘Oh my lord, may your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are equal to Pharaoh.’”

Judah begins his speech with deferential language, honoring Joseph and acknowledging his power and authority over him and his brothers to do as he pleases with them.

Genesis 44:19

“My lord asked his servants, saying, ‘Have you a father or a brother?’”

In Genesis 44:19-23, Judah summarizes their first journey to Egypt and first audience with Joseph.

Judah reminds Joseph that he had shown real concern in their personal affairs by inquiring if they had a father and another brother and which concern demonstrated that he was a man of compassion and mercy and so this is an appeal to Joseph's compassion and mercy.

Genesis 44:20

“We said to my lord, ‘We have an old father and a little child of his old age. Now his brother is dead, so he alone is left of his mother, and his father loves him.’”

The statement “we have an old father” refers to Jacob/Israel and the statement “a little child of his old age” is a reference to Benjamin.

The statement “a little child of his old age” implies that Benjamin was spoiled by his father because he was the lone surviving child of his favorite wife Rachel.

The expression “little child” is an inaccurate translation since the expression is composed of the noun *yeledh* (דל#y#) (yeh-led), which means, “young man” and the adjective *qatan* (/f*q*) (kaw-tawn), which means, “youngest.”

“Old age” is the noun *z^equnim* (<yn!q | z+) (zaw-koon), which is in the plural form expressing the condition of advanced age.

Therefore, the Hebrew text describes Benjamin as “a young man, youngest child of his old age.” At this point in the narrative, Benjamin was more than twenty-two years of age since Benjamin was born before Joseph went down to Egypt.

The statement “his brother is dead” is a reference to Joseph who is the lone full brother of Benjamin. Judah's account is unintentionally inaccurate since Joseph is not dead but is in fact standing right in front of Judah.

The statement “he (Benjamin) alone is left of his mother” means that Benjamin is the lone surviving child of Jacob and Rachel.

The statement “his father (Jacob) loves him (Benjamin)” means that Jacob has not changed and still plays favorites with his children by doting upon his lone surviving child of his favorite wife Rachel. This statement acknowledges and emphasizes his father's favoritism since it was

Jacob's love for Joseph that caused his brothers to hate him but is now the basis for showing mercy to their father.

Genesis 44:21

“Then you said to your servants, ‘Bring him down to me that I may set my eyes on him.’”

This statement is a reference to the first audience that Joseph had with his brothers, which is recorded in Genesis 42:15-16. If you recall, Joseph accused his brothers of espionage in order that he might verify their statement that they are honest men and that Benjamin was in fact alive and had not been killed by his brothers.

Based upon the past actions of his brothers in attempting to kill him and selling him into slavery, Joseph sought to test the veracity of their statement by demanding that they produce Benjamin and bring him into his presence.

Genesis 44:22

“But we said to my lord, ‘The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.’”

Genesis 44:23

“You said to your servants, however, ‘Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.’”

A comparison of Genesis 44:22 and 23 along with Genesis 42:20 and 43:5 indicates that the statement in Genesis 44:22 was made during the second audience with Joseph but was not recorded. Judah demonstrates great tact in omitting any reference to the accusations of espionage and their imprisonment.

Genesis 44:24

“Thus it came about when we went up to your servant my father, we told him the words of my lord.”

This statement is a reference to the conversation between Jacob and his sons after returning from Egypt the first time and is recorded in Genesis 42:29-38.

Genesis 44:25

“Our father said, ‘Go back, buy us a little food.’”

In Genesis 44:25, Judah is recounting his father's statement, which is recorded in Genesis 43:2 and which statement expressed his father's sentiment that the famine will only last a little while longer, which was not to be the case.

Genesis 44:26

“But we said, ‘We cannot go down. If our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.’”

In Genesis 44:26, Judah is recounting his statement to his father, which is recorded in Genesis 43:3-5. It was absolutely essential to produce Benjamin for the lord of Egypt since this would disprove the espionage charge leveled against the brothers by the lord of Egypt.

Genesis 44:27-28

“Your servant my father said to us, ‘You know that my wife bore 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.’”

Judah is recounting for Joseph a statement his father made, which is not recorded as being spoken by Jacob upon the return of his sons from Egypt. The statement is recorded here in order to give the reader more details regarding what Jacob said to his sons upon their return from Egypt. It is recorded here and not included with the previous conversations that Jacob had with his sons when they returned to Egypt but is recorded here in order to emphasize that for the first time Joseph learns of his father's reaction to his alleged death.

Genesis 44:29

“If you take this one also from me, and harm befalls him, you will bring my gray hair down to Sheol in sorrow.”

In Genesis 44:27-29, Judah is recounting and giving more details concerning his father's statement, which is recorded in Genesis 42:38.

Judah makes reference to Rachel (“my wife”) and Benjamin and Joseph (“two sons”), the latter of which Jacob believed to have been “torn in pieces” by wild animals.

Next, we come to the second part of Judah's speech, which is recorded in Genesis 44:30-32 and emphasizes to Joseph the adverse impact on his father if Benjamin is enslaved in Egypt.

Genesis 44:30-31

“Now, therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad is not with us, since his life is bound up in the lad's life, when he sees that the lad is not with us, he will die. Thus your servants will bring the gray hair of your servant our father down to Sheol in sorrow.”

Judah emphasizes the bond of affection between their father and Benjamin and makes his father's words his own by stating that their father will die if Benjamin does not return home to him.

Now, we come to the final part of Judah's speech, which is recorded in Genesis 44:32-34 in which Judah offers himself as a slave in the place of Benjamin.

Genesis 44:32

“For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, ‘If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever.’”

Judah's statement explains why he is acting as the spokesman for all his brothers. Judah makes reference to two distinct legal idioms in the days of patriarchs in order to emphasize the seriousness with which he is willing to assume responsibility of Benjamin.

The statement “your servant became surety for the lad to my father” is a reference to the first legal idiom, which refers to the statement Judah made to his father, which is recorded in Genesis 43:9. This statement means that Judah guaranteed his father the safety of Benjamin by pledging that he will give his life and forfeit his estate in order to protect Benjamin.

The statement “If I do not bring him back to you, then let me bear the blame before my father forever” is a reference to the second legal idiom, which refers to another statement Judah made to his father, which is recorded in Genesis 43:9. This second idiom is used with respect to bloodshed indicating that Judah will be held responsible and

will be required to give an account if Benjamin dies.

Judah's promise to his father in Genesis 43:9 “then let me bear the blame before you” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “I will have been guilty of sinning against you.”

In the Hebrew text of Genesis 43:9 and 44:32 the word “forever” is composed of the adjective *kol* (K) (kole), “all” and articular plural form of the noun *yom* (<w)y) (yome), “the days.”

Therefore, together these three words literally mean “all the days (of my life)” indicating Judah is promising his father that he will bear the personal guilt and blame “all the days of his life” if Benjamin dies and not for all of eternity.

“Then let me bear the blame” is the verb *chata* (ʔf*j*) (khaw-taw), which is in the qal stem and means, “to be guilty of a moral wrongdoing or sin,” which causes offense to another. Therefore, this verb indicates that Judah is saying to his father that if he does not bring Benjamin back to Jacob alive, then he will have been guilty of sinning against his father and would also bear the personal guilt and shame as well.

Genesis 44:33

“Now, therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers.”

Genesis 44:34

“For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me -- for fear that I see the evil that would overtake my father?”

Judah is hoping that Joseph will understand his dilemma in which he finds himself and will be sympathetic to his petition. If Judah returns to Canaan without Benjamin, his father will die. Judah is directly related to this situation since it is he who had assured his father of Benjamin's safe return, offering himself as surety.

Judah laid out all the facts and now the situation is seen in the light of what Benjamin's captivity would do to this patriarch about whom in previous audiences Joseph previously seemed to show concern. If Joseph would consent to a substitution, his father's death could be averted but if he did not

consent, then Judah was willing to become his slave since he could not bear to bring any more grief upon his father. He would prefer to remain a slave in Egypt than to be free in Canaan and witness the pain and suffering he had helped to bring upon his father.

Ironically, the one who was responsible for the idea of selling Joseph into slavery now offers to make himself the slave of his own victim, which is another manifestation of the providence of God, which contends that our lives are not governed by chance or fate but by God. Judah feels responsible since he was the one who came up with the idea to sell Joseph into slavery. However, we must remember that Judah did so only to prevent the death of Joseph.

The fact that Judah proposed to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites rather than killing him along with the phrase “Judah departed from his brothers,” which is recorded in Genesis 38:1 is a clear indication that Judah did “not” agree with his brother’s desire to kill Joseph and so he separates from them.

If you recall, in Genesis 37 we read that Reuben intervened and prevented his brothers from killing Joseph and proposed as an alternative to killing him with their bare hands that they throw him into an empty cistern and letting him die of natural causes. This alternative was proposed by Reuben with the intention of saving Joseph when his brothers were not around.

After this Reuben left his brothers while they ate a meal and during the meal the talk was certainly revolving around Joseph and the idea of killing him. Genesis 37:25-28 records Judah proposing to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites in order to prevent the murder of Joseph by his brothers.

Judah’s statement in Genesis 37:27, “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh” reveals that he has a conscience in that he acknowledges and reminds his brothers that Joseph is their brother.

Judah, like Reuben, disguised his desire to prevent the murder of Joseph because he feared for his own life since Simeon and Levi had recently killed

all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

Even though selling Joseph into slavery was evil, Judah felt that Joseph was better off alive as a slave than being dead. Like his brother Reuben, Judah was guilty of a lack of moral courage and self-sacrifice in that he was not willing to stand up to his brothers and sacrifice himself if need be, to prevent the murder of Joseph.

Judah’s offer to be a substitute for Benjamin typifies the Lord Jesus who is our Substitute.

Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died as a substitute for all of us.”

1 John 3:16, “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Genesis 45

In Genesis 44:1-13 we saw Joseph testing the integrity of his brothers by “planting” his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack. By planting his silver cup in Benjamin’s sack, Joseph is testing his brothers as to whether or not they will remain loyal to Benjamin even when he looks guilty of theft or will they abandon him in Egypt as they had done to him.

Joseph has not revealed his identity to his brothers at this point since he is not convinced that if his brothers were faced with the same set of circumstances as when they mistreated him that they would act differently. Therefore, Joseph recreates what took place between him and his brothers twenty years before in order to test to see whether or not they have truly been changed by God and would if given the chance again, not repeat the same crime.

Joseph wanted to discover if his brothers would sell their father’s favorite and Rachel’s son, Benjamin as a slave as they had sold him who also was his father’s favorite and Rachel’s son. He also wanted to know if they would again treat their father insensitively as they did when informing him of his demise twenty years before by letting Benjamin remain in slavery as they did with him.

In Genesis 44:14-34, we saw Judah offering himself to Joseph in place of Benjamin. But before offering himself to Joseph in place of Benjamin, we saw in Genesis 44:14-17 that Judah admits on behalf of his brothers that they are guilty of the selling Joseph into slavery twenty years before.

In Genesis 44:18-29, Judah recounts for Joseph the two previous journeys that he and his brothers made to Egypt, which is recorded Genesis 44:18-29. In Genesis 44:30-32, Judah emphasizes to Joseph the adverse impact on his father if Benjamin is enslaved in Egypt. In Genesis 44:32-34, Judah offers himself as a slave in the place of Benjamin.

Genesis 45:1-4 records Joseph revealing his true identity to his brothers upon hearing Judah offering himself as a substitute for Benjamin so that his father would not have to suffer the loss of another child. This passage is the climax of the story of the account of Joseph and his brothers.

Genesis 45:1

“Then Joseph could not control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried, ‘Have everyone go out from me.’ So there was no man with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers.”

Judah’s impassioned speech and willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of Benjamin and his father has revealed conclusively that his brothers are no longer motivated by hate and selfishness but rather by love for one another, possessing integrity within themselves and with one another and have passed the final test. Therefore, Joseph could no longer keep himself composed and his pent up emotions could now be released, now that his brothers have demonstrated repeatedly through various tests that God has transformed their character.

When Joseph was seventeen, his brothers were disloyal to him and hated him and were insensitive to their father’s feelings and attempted to murder him and eventually sold him into slavery. But they have changed in that they are loyal to their father’s favorite Benjamin and love him and do not hate him as they did Joseph and are sensitive to their father’s feelings towards Benjamin.

As evidenced by Judah’s offer to become a slave in the place of Benjamin in order to spare their father any more grief, the brothers demonstrate that they love their father and brother to the point of self-sacrifice.

The statement “Joseph could not control himself” means that Joseph could no longer keep himself composed and control his emotions as a result of listening to Judah’s impassioned speech and willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of Benjamin and his father.

Joseph’s brothers have repeatedly demonstrated conclusively to him by means of passing the various tests that Joseph put them through that God has indeed transformed their character and that now he can reveal his true identity and can be reconciled to his brothers.

Henry M. Morris gives this excellent comment, he writes, “No longer could there be the least doubt in Joseph’s mind that his brothers were completely changed men. He had subjected them to the most severe tests, and they had passed with flying colors. The testing itself had been a means of spiritual growth for them; they were more conscious than ever of the leading of God and their responsibility to Him. They were more aware than they had ever been of their own unworthiness and of God’s mercy. Finally, their troubles had brought them all closer together, and now they were of one mind, loving one another and their father as they had never done before. And then, with Judah making such a strong plea that Joseph allow him to take Benjamin’s punishment, so that Benjamin could go home free, Joseph could no longer control his emotions. Not only did the brothers not resent Benjamin, they were even willing to share his sufferings, and, in Judah’s case at least, to die for him” (The Genesis Record, page 619, Baker Book House).

Not only have Joseph’s brothers confessed their sin to God regarding the crime they committed against him when he was seventeen years of age but they are also obedient to God in that they now love one another as demonstrated by their concern for their father and willingness to sacrifice themselves for Benjamin.

The confession of sin to God the Father followed by obedience to the Word of God constitutes “repentance.”

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

1 John 2:5, “But, whoever, at any time does observe conscientiously His Word, indeed, in this one, the love for the one and only God is accomplished. By means of this we can confirm that we are at this particular moment in fellowship with Him.”

“Repentance” means to go in one direction and to change your mind and go in the exact opposite direction and does not involve emotion or feeling sorry for your sins.

The word in the Greek New Testament for “repentance” is the noun *metanoia*, (metavnoia), which means “a change of mind” since it is composed of the preposition *meta* (metav), “change” and the noun *nous* (nou~\$), “mind.”

There is another word, which appears six times in the Greek New Testament which has an emotional connotation and that is the verb *metamelomai* (metamevlomai), which means, “to feel sorry, to regret, to feel sorrow.”

Metamelomai expresses a merely emotional change while *metanoia* expresses a change of choice. It signifies nothing but regret resulting in feeling sorry while *metanoia* deals with a change of mental attitude. *Metanoia* concerns your volition and not your emotions.

Joseph commands his Egyptian entourage to leave the room so that he can share in this intensely intimate moment of reconciliation with his brothers and by doing so he identifies himself with the struggling covenant family of God rather than the riches of Egypt just as Moses did (See Hebrews 11:22).

Reconciliation and unity between brothers in the natural realm or in the spiritual realm is pleasing to God.

Psalm 133:1-3, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in

unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, coming down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon coming down upon the mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing -- life forever.”

Appropriately, Joseph commands everyone not connected to his immediate family to leave the room so that he can share an intimate moment of reconciliation with his brothers and not have the general public observing since this is a matter between Joseph and his brothers and not those outside of their family.

The phrase “all those who stood by him” refers to Joseph's entourage.

Joseph expels everyone from the room since he was dealing with a family matter, which had nothing to do with his public responsibilities as a servant of Pharaoh and the people of Egypt.

Joseph also expelled everyone from the room in order to deal with the matter of the sin his brothers committed against him years before in strict privacy.

The eleven brothers must have wondered what was going on and what the lord of Egypt was going to do or say to them when he gave this command to expel everyone from the room except them.

Genesis 45:2

“He wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.”

Joseph's loud crying was a response to Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of Joseph's only full brother Benjamin and their father and also expressed his relief that the character of his brothers has been transformed by God.

Weeping is an emotion and emotion composes one fifth of the human soul with the other elements of the soul being the volition, self-consciousness, mentality and conscience. Emotion is the responder to what is in the mentality of the soul. Therefore, Joseph's loud crying was a normal function of his soul.

Joseph's loud crying was an expression of his emotion, which responded to Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself for the sake of his brother and father. This is the third of five times that Joseph weeps during this process of reconciliation with his brothers (See Genesis 42:24; 43:30; 45:1-2; 14-15; 50:17).

The Lord Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb (John 11:6) and before His entrance into Jerusalem to present Himself to the nation of Israel as Messiah (See Luke 19:41) and believers are commanded to weep with those who weep (See Romans 12:15).

The Scriptures have much to say about our tears.

Ecclesiastes 3:4, "A time to weep and a time to laugh."

The Lord has a record of our tears.

Psalms 56:8, "You have taken account of my wanderings; Put my tears in Your bottle. Are they not in Your book?"

The apostle Paul wept and Timothy wept.

Acts 20:18-19, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews."

2 Corinthians 2:4, "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you."

2 Timothy 1:4, "longing to see you, even as I recall your tears, so that I may be filled with joy."

Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ wept.

Hebrews 5:7, "In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety."

The Lord promises to wipe away all our tears.

Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces."

Luke 6:21, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh."

Believers are commanded to weep with those who weep.

Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

Joseph's weeping was not only a response to Judah's willingness to sacrifice himself for Benjamin and his father but also an expression of gratitude towards the Lord for reuniting him with his brothers.

Psalms 86:12, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever."

1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

The eleven brothers must have been shocked to see this high ranking Egyptian official break into uncontrollable tears in their presence but they are really are going to be shocked when they hear what he is about to say to them all.

One can only imagine what the brothers must have been thinking when the lord of Egypt broke into tears. Up to this point in the narrative, we have seen Joseph treat his brothers graciously and inviting them into his home, sent back to Canaan with abundant provisions (See Genesis 43:32--44:1). Then they were stopped and searched, each of them being found with their money in their sack and Benjamin with Joseph's cup in his possession (See Genesis 44:6-13). They acknowledged their guilt and all were willing to remain as Joseph's slaves, but Joseph refused to detain any except Benjamin, the alleged "guilty" party (See Genesis 44:14-17).

Judah then made an impassioned appeal for mercy on behalf of his aged father, offering himself in place of Benjamin (See Genesis 44:18-34). Judah and his brothers anxiously await a verdict from Joseph, one that will affect the course of their lives.

Without knowing who Joseph is or what he intended to do, the brothers saw this powerful leader of Egypt send everyone out of the room. They could perhaps see the tears flowing down his

cheeks and his chest heaving with emotion. However, they could not detect the source of this great emotion. Was it anger, which would lead to further trouble? How could it be otherwise?

Genesis 45:3

“Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?’ But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed at his presence.”

Genesis 45:4

“Then Joseph said to his brothers, ‘Please come closer to me.’ And they came closer. And he said, ‘I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt.’”

Up to this point to conceal his true identity, Joseph presented himself to his brothers as the lord of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in authority and power in Egypt who spoke through an interpreter to them. However, now, Joseph speaks in his native Hebrew tongue to his brothers in order to reveal his true identity to them.

The statement “I am Joseph!” was the worst news that the brothers could ever have hoped to hear and gave them more anxiety since it was bad enough to stand before a powerful Egyptian ruler who was angered at the theft of his silver cup, but to realize that he was their brother whom they had sold into slavery was simply too much!

Before, they at least had a hope that this judge would be impartial and that mercy might motivate him to accept their appeal. But now they were convinced that this judge must surely be their enemy, whom they had unjustly and cruelly condemned.

How could they hope for better treatment from him? No wonder they were terrified.

Joseph’s first words declared his identity, which was followed quickly by an expression of concern for his father. He, like Judah and the others, cared greatly for his elderly father. The thought of Jacob’s grief was unbearable to Joseph as well as to the rest but he also cared for his brothers. They must have shrunk back from him in horror, but Joseph asked them to draw near (verse 4).

The brothers are totally shocked and cannot respond with words to this revelation since they were terrified to be in the presence of Joseph who they committed an awful crime against over twenty years before.

The statement “they were dismayed” is the verb *bahal* (לִּהְבֹּחַ) (baw-hal), which means, “to be terrified” and refers to paralyzing fear and describes the result of some terrifying event, something, which impacts the emotional and reasoning capacity of people, also causing physical manifestation. Therefore, the original Hebrew text of Genesis 45:3 records that Joseph’s brothers were “terrified,” “paralyzed with fear” when Joseph revealed his true identity and that their physical bodies shook with fear at this revelation.

The brothers were terrified since they thought Joseph would exact revenge upon them for the crime against him since Joseph was now the prime minister of Egypt who now possessed the power to execute them as criminals in Egypt.

Joseph requests that his brothers come closer to him in order to reassure them and calm their fears that he would not seek revenge upon them.

Joseph’s statement “I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt” is not a rebuke but an attempt to further reveal his identity and to relieve his brothers of the guilt that they have been carrying in their souls for over twenty years.

The brothers have been carrying the secret of selling Joseph into slavery for over twenty years and as a result have been burden with guilt but now Joseph reveals this secret so that they can be freed from suppressed guilt. As long as the brothers live in fear of Joseph, there can be no intimacy between Joseph and his brothers until Joseph audibly says he forgives them and demonstrates that forgiveness by treating his brothers as if the crime against Joseph had never taken place.

In Genesis 45:5-8, we will see Joseph reassuring his brothers that he will not exact revenge upon them but rather reveals to them that their cruel treatment of him fourteen years before was a part of God’s plan to deliver their family from starvation and the corrupt Canaanite influence. In

this passage, we will see the magnanimity of Joseph towards his brothers.

Let's look more closely at Genesis 45:5.

Genesis 45:5

“Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

Joseph's two prohibitions “do not be grieved or angry with yourselves” means that both he and God have forgiven them for selling him into slavery twenty two years before. He does not want them to be consumed with sorrow because they sold him into slavery nor angry with themselves for doing this since both he and God have forgiven them.

The believer is both the object and the subject of forgiveness. God the Father sent His Son to the cross in order die for our sins so that He can forgive us. He forgives us based upon His integrity and His Son's spiritual death on the cross.

1 John 3:5, “He (the Lord Jesus Christ) appeared in order to take away sins.”

The forgiveness of sins is offered to the entire human race by God the Father based upon the merits of the voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of His Son, the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the Cross.

Unbelievers are not judged according to their sins at the Great White Throne Judgment but rather are judged according to their self-righteous human good works, which do not measure up to the perfect work of the impeccable Christ on the Cross (Rev. 20:11-15). The unbeliever goes to the lake of fire because of his rejection of Christ as his Savior since 1 Timothy 2:4 and John 3:16-17 clearly indicates that God desires all men to be saved, thus, He has made provision for all men to be saved through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross.

At the moment of salvation the believer received the forgiveness of his sins in the “positional” sense, which refers to what He has done for us and how He views us as His children. It is through faith alone in Christ alone that an individual receives the forgiveness of sins, which is based entirely upon the merits of the Lord Jesus and His

finished work on the cross and for Christ's sake sins are forgiven.

Ephesians 1:7, “In Him (the Lord Jesus Christ) we have redemption through His blood (metaphor for our Lord's spiritual death), the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.”

Although the believer experiences the forgiveness of sins at the moment of salvation, the moment he sins, he must confess these post-salvation sins so that he can once again experience the forgiveness of sins, which has already been appropriated by him at the moment of salvation positionally and will be his for all of eternity. The confession of sins after salvation is essential in order to experience “fellowship” with God.

1 John 1:9, “If any of us does confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is, as an eternal spiritual truth, faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and He purifies us from each and every wrongdoing.”

The believer's “fellowship” with God is “dynamic” meaning it can be lost due to sin but restored through the confession of sin whereas the believer's “eternal relationship” with God is “static” meaning it can never change due to sin.

The believer is forgiven based upon the merits of the unique voluntary substitutionary spiritual death of the impeccable humanity of Christ in hypostatic union on the cross, and as a result the Father is faithful and just to forgive the believer and restores the believer to fellowship with Himself.

In the same way that the unbeliever's sins are not brought up at the Great White Throne so the believer's sins will never be brought up at the Bema Seat Evaluation of the church since the believer's personal sins were also paid for by the Lord Jesus Christ's substitutionary spiritual death on the cross.

Isaiah 43:25, “I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”

Psalms 103:12-13, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. Just as a father has

compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.”

God remembers the believer’s sins no more because of the merits of Christ and His substitutionary spiritual death.

The believer who does not acknowledge his unforgiving attitude towards others will not be forgiven by God meaning that the believer will not be restored to fellowship with Him.

Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive men their failures (acknowledging your own sin to the Father and forgive others), Your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their failures (failure to acknowledge your own sin to the Father and forgive others), neither will the Father forgive you (restoration to fellowship), your failures.”

Scripture bases the forgiveness of one another in the forgiveness of God in that not only is the believer the object of God’s forgiveness but also he has now become the subject of forgiveness since he is to exhibit the same attitude toward others as God has displayed towards him.

Ephesians 4:31-32, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be gracious to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Joseph had the capacity to forgive his brothers because he knew that it was a part of God’s plan from eternity past that he would be sold into slavery by his brothers in order that he might be used by God to deliver their family from famine.

In Genesis 45:5-8, we see Joseph being “magnanimous” towards his brothers who had in the past treated him cruelly and unjustly. A believer who is “magnanimous” is generous in forgiving insults and injuries without being vindictive and becoming involved in petty resentfulness.

In Genesis 45:5-8, we see that Joseph is generous in forgiving the insult heaped upon him by his brothers and yet Joseph is not pettily resentful or vindictive towards them. Rather, Joseph insists upon maintaining a good relationship with his

brothers and is tolerant, patient and generous toward his brothers.

A believer who is “magnanimous” is noble in character, loving justice but not insisting upon the letter of the law in order to preserve the spirit of the law and does not insist upon his own rights to the fullest but rectifies and redresses the injustices of justice.

Joseph does not insist upon his own rights by not demanding that his brothers be judged and he did this in order to preserve unity between himself and his brothers.

Joseph, who was the ruler of Egypt, humbles himself before his brothers who are subordinate to him in order to preserve peace, thereby demonstrating himself to be the spiritual superior of his brothers.

Joseph’s condescension and humility foreshadows the condescension and humility and magnanimity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 8:9, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”

The Lord promoted Joseph because of his humility whereas the Lord humbled Joseph’s brothers because of their arrogance and selfishness.

Luke 14:11, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Joseph denied himself and humbled himself, which foreshadows the self-denial and humility of the Lord Jesus Christ at the Cross.

Philippians 2:5-11

“Everyone continue thinking this (according to humility) within yourselves, which was also in (the mind of) Christ Jesus, Who although existing from eternity past in the essence of God, He never regarded existing equally in essence with God an exploitable asset.”

“On the contrary, He denied Himself of the independent function of His deity by having assumed the essence of a slave when He was born in the likeness of men.”

“In fact, although He was discovered in outward appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by having entered into obedience to the point of spiritual death even death on a Cross.”

“For this very reason in fact God the Father has promoted Him to the highest-ranking position and has awarded to Him the rank, which is superior to every rank.”

“In order that in the sphere of this rank possessed by Jesus every person must bow, celestials and terrestrials and sub-terrestrials.”

“Also, every person must publicly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the glory of God the Father.”

The apostle Paul commanded the Philippian believers to be magnanimous.

Philippians 4:5, “Permit your magnanimity to become manifest to everyone. The Lord’s return is immanent.”

The magnanimous behavior of a believer manifests one of the characteristics of Christ who was generous and gracious in forgiving and tolerant in the face of insults and is a manifestation of the Spirit’s work in the life of a believer.

James 3:17, “But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, magnanimous, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy.”

Magnanimous behavior among believers will resolve personality conflicts and is one of the qualities that a pastor is to possess.

1 Timothy 3:3, “not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but magnanimous, peaceable, free from the love of money.”

Titus 3:2, “to malign no one, to be peaceable, magnanimous, showing every consideration for all men.”

Magnanimity among believers will produce unity in the local assembly.

Joseph’s magnanimity has produced peace between him and his brothers.

Genesis 45:5

“Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life.”

“Now” is composed of the conjunction w^e ($w+$) (waw) and the adverb $\`attah$ ($h\bar{T}^*u^{\wedge}$) ($at-taw$), which together are used in an emphatic sense meaning, “in fact.”

The adverb $\`attah$ is frequently used in Scripture in order to introduce a new development or episode.

In Genesis 45:5, this adverb along with the conjunction w^e introduces in an emphatic way Joseph assuring his brothers that he had no plans for revenge and that their actions against him in the past were a part of God’s plan to deliver their family from starvation and the corrupt Canaanite influence.

Joseph’s two prohibitions “do not be grieved or angry with yourselves” means that both he and God have forgiven them for selling him into slavery twenty two years before. He does not want them to be consumed with sorrow because they sold him into slavery nor angry with themselves for doing this since both he and God have forgiven them.

“God” is the noun *Elohim*, which emphasizes the sovereignty of God over Joseph and his family as well as the providence of God in that their lives were not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

The noun *Elohim*, “God” also emphasizes that God is omnipotent and is able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, which was to deliver Joseph’s family, the Egyptians and the entire world from starvation.

“Sent” is the verb *shalach* ($j\bar{l}^{\wedge}v^*$) ($shaw-lakh$), which refers to “persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers.”

Therefore, Joseph is saying to his brothers that he was a messenger of God sent by God to deliver his family from the coming famine.

The causal clause “because you sold me here” refers to the actions of Joseph’s brothers twenty two years before when they sold him to the Midianites/Ishmaelites who in turn sold him to Potiphar in Egypt and gives the reason why

Joseph's brothers might become sorrowful or angry with themselves.

Notice that Joseph does not minimize or overlook their sin, nor does he belabor what they did to him since they have acknowledged their sin against him and have demonstrated that they have repented from their actions in that they have confessed their sin to God and have proceeded to be obedient to God by loving each other.

The causal clause "for God sent me before you to preserve life" gives Joseph's brothers the reason why they should not get angry with themselves or sorrowful for selling him into slavery years before.

The statement "God sent me before you to preserve life" means that it was a part of God's will that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers in Egypt in order that Joseph might be the instrument God would use to deliver not only his family from famine but also the Egyptians and the inhabitants of the entire world.

The phrase "God sent me" appears in Genesis 45:5, 7 and 8 and the word "God" appears in Genesis 45:5, 7, 8 and 9 emphasizing the sovereignty of God over Joseph and his family and the divine decree.

The statement "God sent me before you to preserve life" means that the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was figured by God into His plan from eternity past, which is called "the divine decree."

Knowing this, gave Joseph the capacity to forgive his brothers.

God had figured into the divine decree so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself not only the resentment of Joseph's brothers towards him but also their selling him into slavery and Joseph ending upon in Egypt.

The divine decree is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future and so therefore, God rendered certain to take place that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt and it was thus a part of God's plan.

God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist and so

therefore, God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that God rendered certain to occur that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt and God decided that these things would exist.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable will. Therefore, God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that it was a part of God's plan from eternity past that Joseph would be sold into slavery by his brothers.

The "providence" of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and ended up in Egypt did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob's family and to bring glory to Himself.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works and so God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that it was a part of God's chosen and adopted plan that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt. The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. Therefore, God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that it was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory that Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery so that he might be the instrument God would use to deliver his family from famine as well as the entire world.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers was the result of God's sovereign will and omniscience by which this event was brought into being and was controlled and made subject to God's pleasure and glorified Him.

The "decree of God" is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all

things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity (i.e., that they will certainly take place).

When I say “comprehending” I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by “determining” I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events. Therefore, the omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past that Joseph’s brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery and that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. Therefore, God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was sovereignly determined by God to take place and was known by God in eternity past before anything was created.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. Therefore, it was God’s eternal and immutable will that Joseph’s brothers would resent him and sell him into slavery and that he would end up in Egypt and God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation and in relation to the divine decree refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time.

God sent Joseph to Egypt in the sense that God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that Joseph would be resented by his brothers and sold into slavery by them and end up in Egypt and He

decided that these events would take place in the exact time that they did.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice. In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the decisions of Joseph’s brothers, Joseph and Jacob himself would all take place in time and even those by Joseph’s brothers, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle our decisions. Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time the decisions that Joseph’s brothers would make and decreed that those decisions would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle their decisions.

Therefore, the statement “God has sent me before you to preserve life” means that Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers and his ending up in Egypt was a part of God’s sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place Joseph’s brothers resenting him and selling him into slavery and that Joseph would end up in Egypt.

The statement “God has sent me before you to preserve life” implies that the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was figured into the divine decree and was a part of the providence of God, which is the outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory.

God used the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt to deliver not only the Egyptians but also Joseph's family and the entire world from starvation. If Joseph doesn't get sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers, he never ends up with Potiphar and if he never ends up with Potiphar in Egypt, then he would never have met Pharaoh's cupbearer.

If Joseph does not meet Pharaoh's cupbearer, then he never meets Pharaoh and if he never meets Pharaoh, then Joseph will never be able to interpret the dreams God gave Pharaoh, which predicted the impending seven year famine. If he does not interpret these dreams of Pharaoh, then he will not be able to give Pharaoh the contingency plan to deal with this impending disaster and if so, then Pharaoh would have no one in his kingdom to administrate the nation of Egypt during the seven years of plenty and famine. If Joseph does not administrate the nation of Egypt during the seven years of plenty and famine, then the nation of Egypt would be destroyed by the famine and if so, Joseph's family would have died of starvation since they came to Egypt to buy food to deal with the famine in Canaan. If Joseph's family dies of starvation, then the nation of Israel dies in its infancy and if so, then the Savior cannot come into the world and then there would be no salvation for man and no fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) and thus making God unfaithful.

We can look at the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers in relation to the will of God from even another perspective. The selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers is another example of the function of the "permissive," "directive" and "overruling" will of God.

The "directive" will of God refers to what God directly requires of an individual, His "permissive" will refers to Him "permitting" His creatures to act contrary to what He desires and His "overruling" will refers to the fact that at times God "overrules" the bad decisions of His creatures in order to perpetuate His plan.

The "directive" will of God prohibited Joseph's brothers from attempting to murder him and sell him into slavery however God "permitted" their

decisions to take place that were contrary to His "directive" will.

God also "overruled" their bad decisions in that He caused Pharaoh to promote Joseph as prime minister of Egypt in order to deliver not only Egypt from famine but also Joseph's family and the entire world.

Genesis 45:6

"For the famine has been in the land these two years, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting."

The statement in Genesis 45:6 indicates that there would be five more years of famine since God told Pharaoh in his dreams that there would be seven years of famine according to Joseph's interpretation (See Genesis 41).

The expression "neither plowing nor harvesting" is a figure of speech called "merism" which is an expression of totality through the combinations of opposites and so Joseph is referring to the agricultural activities in Egypt in the sense that there will be no effective plowing, which would produce a yield.

Genesis 45:7

"God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant in the earth, and to keep you alive by a great deliverance."

"Remnant" is the noun *sh^e'erith* (tyr!a@v+) (sheh-ay-reeth), which denotes descendants who have survived a great catastrophe. This word signifies that the nation of Israel in its infancy narrowly escaped complete destruction because it is a part of God's plan to bring in the Greatest Deliverer, the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Great" refers to the fact that this deliverance of Joseph's family and the Egyptians and the entire world from famine was "supernatural" in the sense that God was responsible for it.

"Deliverance" is the noun *p^eletah* (hf*y!@P+) (pel-ay-taw), which literally means, "survivor" and is a technical term along with "remnants" for the descendants of the patriarchs who survive great catastrophes of their collective pilgrimage

(See Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary*, page 564, Zondervan).

The statement in Genesis 45:7 implies that like Noah whom God used as His agent to deliver his family from a worldwide flood, so Joseph was used by God as His agent to deliver not only Joseph's family and the Egyptians but also the entire world.

Genesis 45:8

“Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh and lord of all his household and ruler over all the land of Egypt.”

Joseph makes clear to his brothers that God has given him his power and authority in Egypt.

The statement “He (God) has made me a father to Pharaoh” means that God has chosen Joseph to be Pharaoh's chief advisor in that just as a father instructs his son so Joseph instructed Pharaoh.

The statement “He (God) has made me a father to Pharaoh” is synonymous to the statement “when he (Joseph) stood before Pharaoh, king of Egypt” which appears in Genesis 41:46, which refers to the fact that Joseph possessed the honor of being on intimate terms with Pharaoh and having his confidence.

The statement “it was not you who sent me here (Egypt) but God” is an attempt by Joseph to alleviate the guilt and shame of his brothers for selling him into slavery by placing their crime against the broader picture of God's sovereignty.

God overruled their bad decision in order to preserve his plan for the nation of Israel and to bring in the Savior of the world.

This is the third time that Joseph has referred to the fact that the crime his brothers committed against him was figured into the divine decree and was thus a part of God's plan for him in that God would use Joseph to deliver the entire world from famine and not only his family.

H.C. Leupold gives this excellent comment, he writes, “Here Joseph shows himself particularly wise in ministering to the souls of his brethren. If their sorrow does not learn to reckon with God, His mercy and His mighty providence, it will

remain a mere earthly sorrow, which serves no particular purpose. To see God's purpose and judge from His point of view, that throws clear light on everything” (*Exposition of Genesis* volume 2, page 1094, Baker Book House).

The expression “lord of all his (Pharaoh's) household” is a reference to Pharaoh's statement “you shall be over my house” in Genesis 41:40, which means that Joseph was given control over Pharaoh's entire household including all of his advisors.

The expression “ruler over all the land of Egypt” is a reference to Pharaoh's statement “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt” in Genesis 41:40, which means that Pharaoh conferred upon Joseph total authority in the task of administering the nation of Egypt and would only be under Pharaoh's authority.

Genesis 45:9-11 records Joseph sending a message to his father Israel through his brothers to find refuge from the famine in Egypt.

Genesis 45:9

“Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, ‘Thus says your son Joseph, ‘God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.’”

Genesis 45:10

“You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.”

Genesis 45:11

“There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.”

In Genesis 45:9-11, we see Joseph commanding his brothers to communicate to their father his counsel that their family migrate to Egypt in order to escape the famine that would continue for another five years.

If Joseph's family dies of starvation, then the nation of Israel dies in its infancy and if so, then the Savior cannot come into the world and then there would be no salvation for man and no

fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) and thus making God unfaithful.

In this passage, Joseph reveals to his brothers one of the reasons why God permitted them to sell him into slavery in Egypt, namely, to deliver their family from the famine and preserve their embryonic nation so that the Savior could come into the world at a later date.

The fact that Joseph is commanding his brothers to communicate his plan to relocate their entire family to Egypt to their father would reassure his brothers and set their minds at ease that he had no plans to exact revenge upon them for selling him into slavery since he is including their father in his plans for all of them.

Joseph's counsel is according to the will of God since God prophesied to Abraham that his descendants would be in Egypt for four hundred years (See Genesis 15:12-16) and so Joseph's counsel is the first step in the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Genesis 15:12, 13

"Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him."

"God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.'"

"Your descendants" is a reference to the nation of Israel and the "land" in which the nation of Israel would be strangers in and would be enslaved to and oppressed for four hundred years is Egypt.

"Four hundred years" is a "round" number for the more precise figure of four hundred thirty years appears in Exodus 12:40-41; Acts 7:6; Gal. 3:16-17.

Genesis 15:14, "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions."

"The nation" is a clear reference to Egypt (Ex. 6:6; 7:4; 12:12). "I will judge the nation (Egypt)" is a reference to the Lord judging Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt through the ten plagues for not

letting Israel leave as God had commanded Pharaoh as recorded in Exodus 6-14.

Genesis 15:15, 16

"As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age."

"Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

"They" is a reference to Abram's descendants, namely, the Israelites who will return from the slavery of Egypt to the land promised to Abram and his descendants.

"Generation" is the noun *dor* (רַב{D}) (dore), which denotes a "cycle of time, a life span," which in the context of Genesis 15 is calculated to be one hundred years since Abram had his first child at one hundred years of age (Gen. 21:5). Therefore, the "fourth generation" indicates that after four hundred years Abram's descendants, i.e., the nation of Israel would come back into to the land of Canaan promised to Abram by the Lord. Exodus 6:16-26 records that it was exactly in the fourth generation that the children of Israel left Egypt and returned to Canaan.

The Lord gives the reason for the delay in Abram's descendants possessing the land of Canaan, namely, that the "iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

The "Amorite" is a figure of speech called "synecdoche of the part" where a part is put for the whole, thus the term "the Amorite" is put for the ten nations listed in Genesis 15:19-21, of which "the Amorite" was a part of (cf. Gen. 48:22; Nm. 13:29; 21:21).

Though not stated by Joseph in Genesis 45:9-11, God not only wanted to deliver Joseph's family from the famine but also from the corrupt Canaanite influence, which had already begun to trouble his family (See Genesis 34 and 38).

The embryonic nation could develop into a great nation while in Egypt since the Egyptians unlike the Canaanites, would not seek to intermarry with Israel's family since they despised Hebrews because of their occupation as shepherds.

Moses refers to the development of Israel's family into a great nation while in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 26:5, "You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, 'My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation.'"

Genesis 45:9

"Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, 'God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay.'"

The statements "Hurry and go up to my father...come down to me, do not delay" expresses the urgency to Israel that his family migrate to Egypt since it is according to the will of God that they do so since it would be the first step in the fulfillment of the prophecy given to Abraham recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Notice that Joseph does not procrastinate but rather immediately counsels his brothers to inform their father that their family must migrate to Egypt. The urgency in which Joseph seeks to do God's will is a fulfillment of a spiritual principle noted in Psalm 119:60.

Psalm 119:60, "I hastened and did not delay to keep Your commandments."

Joseph opens his speech to his father pointing to *Elohim*, "God," which emphasizes the sovereignty of God over Joseph and his family as well as the providence of God in that their lives were not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, Joseph invokes the name *Elohim*, "God" to emphasize that it is God's sovereign will that Israel and his family migrate to Egypt.

The noun *Elohim*, "God" also emphasizes that God is omnipotent and is able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, which was to deliver Joseph's family, the Egyptians and the entire world from starvation.

Joseph's statement "God has made me lord of all Egypt" emphasizes that his authority and power over Egypt was given to him by God Himself. This statement would also emphasize to Joseph's father God's providential care of their family and

that it was God's sovereign will that Joseph became prime minister of Egypt to deliver their family from famine.

God worked out the circumstances so that Pharaoh would promote Joseph as prime minister of Egypt. For example, God gave the cupbearer his dreams and Joseph the ability to interpret those dreams, which led to the cupbearer eventually informing Pharaoh two years later of Joseph's supernatural abilities. God also gave Pharaoh his dreams and Joseph the ability to interpret those dreams and make recommendations in light of his interpretation of those dreams, which resulted in Pharaoh promoting Joseph.

The Lord demonstrated His sovereignty over the nations by causing Pharaoh to promote Joseph to prime minister of Egypt.

Psalm 113:5-8, "Who is like the LORD our God, who is enthroned on high, who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes, with the princes of His people."

1 Samuel 2:7-8, "The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, and inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and He set the world on them."

Genesis 45:10

"You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have."

"Goshen" is the proper noun *Goshen* (/v#G) (go-shen), which was located in the eastern part of the Nile Delta, northeast of the Egyptian capital, Memphis and approximately 900 hundred square miles, well suited for grazing and for certain types of agriculture and sparsely occupied allowing room for Hebrew expansion. This area was also called the "land of Rameses" in Genesis 47:11 and according to the Exodus narrative, which records that the Israelites left Goshen under Moses and

went from Rameses through the Wadi Tumilat (a valley connecting the Nile and the Bitter Lakes region, now a part of the Suez Canal system) to Succoth (Compare Exodus 8:18; 12:37; 13:17f). Rameses was probably a later name of an urban complex including Avaris and was built to the north of Avaris, adjoined to it.

“You shall live” is the verb *yashav* (b^v^y*) (yaw-shav), which means, “to live in a place for a period of time” and does “not” mean to live in a place permanently. Therefore, Joseph was counseling his father to live in Goshen for an unspecified period of time, which according to the prophecy given to Abraham recorded in Genesis 15:12-16 turned out to be four hundred years. Although this would be a long term migration from the human perspective, from the divine perspective it would not be permanent.

The fact that Joseph’s family would reside in Goshen would later on protect their descendants, the Israelites from the plagues that God placed upon the nation of Egypt during the Exodus generation (See Exodus 8:22; 9:26).

Genesis 45:11

“There I will also provide for you, for there are still five years of famine to come, and you and your household and all that you have would be impoverished.”

Joseph’s statement “there are still five years of famine to come” repeats the point Joseph made to his brothers in Genesis 45:6 and anticipates resistance by his father to a migration of his entire family from Canaan to Egypt.

Joseph counsels his father to move to Goshen in Egypt to escape the famine in Canaan in order that they might not become impoverished and lose all they had to debt. In famines, the poor mortgaged their lands or sold their family and even themselves into slavery and some of course, died.

Next, we will note Genesis 45:12-15 and read of Joseph embracing and talking to his brothers before their departure for Canaan.

Genesis 45:12

“Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you.”

The statement “Behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see, that it is my mouth which is speaking to you” means that there could no longer be any doubt among Joseph’s brothers as to his identity and his intentions towards them.

The most obvious proof to Joseph’s brothers that he indeed is speaking to them is that he is speaking to them without an interpreter in their native Hebrew tongue! Up to this point to conceal his true identity, Joseph presented himself to his brothers as the lord of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in authority and power in Egypt who spoke through an interpreter to them. However, now, Joseph speaks in his native Hebrew tongue to his brothers in order to reveal his true identity to them.

The message that Joseph will convey through the sons of Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah and Benjamin will seem incredible to Israel since he believes that Joseph is dead. Therefore, Joseph emphasizes to his half-brothers and lone full brother that they are eyewitnesses to the fact that he is now the lord of all Egypt.

“Behold your eyes see...that it is my mouth, which is speaking to you” emphasizes the personal eyewitness testimony of Joseph’s half-brothers, the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah who were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

In case, Israel does not believe the testimony of the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah because of their past conduct, Joseph also offers Benjamin as an eyewitness whose testimony would be beyond reproach in the eyes of his father since Benjamin was his favorite.

Joseph’s statement “the eyes of my brother Benjamin see...that it is my mouth, which is speaking to you” emphasizes that his lone full brother, Benjamin is a personal eyewitness to the fact that he is now the lord of all Egypt and will lend credibility to the eyewitness testimony of the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah.

Genesis 45:13

“Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen;

and you must hurry and bring my father down here.”

Joseph’s statement “Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen” emphasizes to his brothers that their knowledge of his situation is not derived from rumor but from firsthand knowledge.

“Splendor” is the noun *kavodh* (dW)dK*) (kaw-vode), which refers to Joseph’s position of authority, the honor given to him, his reputation and respect paid to him by the people of Egypt and his prestige in Egypt. Therefore, Joseph stresses with his brothers the importance that they give testimony to their father as to Joseph’s position, authority, and prestige in Egypt in order to convince their father to believe Joseph’s message to relocate to Egypt and that he truly has the means to support their family in Egypt.

The purpose of communicating this information about Joseph to their father is not to be self-glorification on Joseph’s part but to convince their father that Joseph possesses sufficient resources and power to execute that which he has planned for the family. Joseph wants his brothers to communicate to their father that he has a position of power and authority, which enables him to provide for his family and to accomplish his plan.

Bob Deffinbaugh has a great comment on this verse, he writes, “In these verses there is a noticeable emphasis upon the glory and splendor which Joseph has attained in Egypt. For some this appears to be out of character for Joseph, who has previously been marked by modesty and humility. Why would he now flaunt his position before his brothers? There are several explanations, one or more of which may satisfy our concerns. First, the glory which Joseph now possesses would serve to encourage his brothers, who are guilt-ridden for the wicked deed they committed against him by selling him as a slave. Joseph would thus be reminding them that his humiliation and suffering were the means to his promotion and exaltation. Look what their sin had brought about in Joseph’s life! Second, it would comfort Jacob and assure him of Joseph’s ability to provide for the entire family during the famine. Finally, it was a glory which Joseph desired to share unselfishly with his brothers. His motive would thus be Christ-like”

(The Book of Genesis, page 349, Biblical Studies, 1997).

Genesis 45:14

“Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck.”

Genesis 45:15

“He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him.”

For the first time ever, Joseph and his brothers were a united family since all the barriers were broken down between them.

Notice that Joseph not only hugged and wept on his full brother Benjamin’s neck but also he did the same with his half-brothers, the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah, which would convince his half-brothers of his good intentions and that he had forgiven them. Joseph forgave each of his brothers, which resulted in breaking down the wall of fear and shame that had separated the brothers not only from Joseph but God. Joseph had the capacity to forgive his brothers because he knew that it was a part of God’s plan from eternity past that he would be sold into slavery by his brothers in order that he might be used by God to deliver their family from famine and the corrupt influence of the Canaanites upon their family.

Unlike Joseph and Benjamin, the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah are not said to have wept, which is due to the fact that they are still too stunned and too distant to weep. They never really were close to Joseph and so there were no emotional bonds between the brothers as Joseph would have with his lone full brother, Benjamin. Once the brothers were convinced of Joseph’s intentions and that he had forgiven them, they finally spoke with Joseph.

The statement “the brothers talked with him” emphasizes that the rift between Joseph and his brothers has been resolved and intimacy achieved, ending twenty-two years of non-communication.

“Talked” is the verb *davar* (rb^D*) (daw-var), which emphasizes the activity of speaking rather than the content of what is said.

The content of the conversation is inconsequential to the reconciliation since intimacy is visceral and

not cerebral (Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, A Commentary, page 564, Zondervan).

We can guess and not be too far off in believing that Joseph would recount everything that had happened to him in Egypt and how the Lord had worked so mightily and graciously in his life. Joseph probably introduced his wife and two kids to his brothers whereas the brothers would have told Joseph all the news from home and about their own families and everything that had taken place the past twenty-two years. So it was a day that Joseph and his brothers would always remember for the rest of their lives.

The reconciliation of Joseph and his brothers was made possible because Joseph forgave his brothers and he forgave his brothers because he recognized and accepted by faith that their cruel treatment of him was a part of God's plan.

Joseph also had the capacity to forgive his brothers because he accepted by faith that God loved him, which was demonstrated in the dreams God gave him, which reveal God's plan for his life.

The fact that God loved Joseph and had a plan for his life was further demonstrated in that God blessed Joseph while with Potiphar and when he was imprisoned and this too gave him the capacity to forgive his brothers.

Reconciliation is only possible when there is forgiveness and forgiveness is only possible when we accept by faith God's forgiveness and love for us as demonstrated through the death of Christ on the Cross. Forgiveness is also possible when we accept by faith God's sovereign control over our lives so that when people mistreat us we realize that it is a part of God's plan just it was a part of God the Father's plan for His Son Jesus Christ to be mistreated by sinners.

Next, we will study Genesis 45:16-20 and read that Joseph's brothers receive a gracious invitation from Pharaoh to live in Egypt.

Genesis 45:16-46:7 contains the fourth and final scene of the third act of the tenth and final section of the book of Genesis, which is contained in Genesis 37:2-50:26 and gives the account of Jacob's descendants.

The first act was contained in Genesis 37:2-38:30, introducing us to the dysfunctional family of Jacob (37:2-38:30), giving us the account of Joseph being rejected by his brothers and sold into slavery (37:2-36) as well as containing the story of Judah sinning against Tamar and having twins with her (38:1-30).

The second act was contained in Genesis 39:1-41:57 presenting Joseph's rise to power over Egypt, giving us the account of Joseph in Potiphar's house (39:1-20), being imprisoned and interpreting the dreams of Pharaoh's cupbearer and baker (39:21-40:23) as well as being promoted by Pharaoh to prime minister (41:1-57).

The third act is contained in Genesis 42:1-46:27, giving us the account of the dysfunctional family of Jacob being reconciled in Egypt and contains four scenes.

The first scene recorded in Genesis 42 presents Joseph's brothers with the exception of Benjamin making their first journey to Egypt to buy grain. Genesis 43 contains the second scene where Joseph's steward returns Simeon to his brothers as soon as, but only after they return the money to him. Genesis 44:1-14 contains the third scene where Joseph put his brothers to their final test of love for their brother in need by making Benjamin alone appear guilty of secretly placing his silver cup in his sack and counseling the other brothers to return home in peace. But then, in Genesis 44:15-34, Judah offers himself as a slave in Benjamin's place, which causes Joseph to reveal his identity to his brothers since they have demonstrated to him that he can trust them completely and this is recorded in Genesis 45:1-15. In the fourth and final scene that is recorded in Genesis 45:16-24 we see Jacob's entire family migrating toward Egypt to live with Joseph.

In the third act that is contained in Genesis 42:1-46:27, we see the spiritual transformation of Joseph's brothers with Joseph and Judah emerging as heroes.

Genesis 45:16 begins the fourth and final scene of the third act and concludes in Genesis 46:7. This fourth and final scene is divided into three sections: (1) In Genesis 45:16-20, Pharaoh commands Joseph to extend an invitation to his father and his brothers to live in Egypt, which

Joseph adds to according to Genesis 45:21-24. (2) In Genesis 45:25-26, Joseph's brothers arrive back in Canaan and announce to their father that Joseph is alive and in Genesis 45:27-28, they convince their father to migrate to Egypt. (3) In Genesis 46:1-4, at Beersheba, the Lord reassures and reconfirms His promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to make their descendants into a great nation by His presence with them in Egypt. The patriarchal period in Canaan ends with this fourth and final scene.

The third section of this fourth and final scene recorded in Genesis 46:1-4 deals with the nation of Israel in its infancy migrating to Goshen where it will develop into a great nation as the Lord promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 45:16

“Now when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house that Joseph's brothers had come, it pleased Pharaoh and his servants.”

The statement “When the news was heard in Pharaoh's house” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “the voice was heard at Pharaoh's house.” This statement repeats the introduction to Joseph revealing his identity to his brothers recorded in Genesis 45:1-2. Therefore, the statement “when the news was heard in Pharaoh's house” links Genesis 45:16 back to the statement in Genesis 45:2 that Joseph “wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard of it.”

A comparison of these verses emphasizes the speed of Pharaoh's response to hearing the news about Joseph's brothers meaning that Pharaoh offered an invitation without hesitation expressing his wholehearted approval of Joseph and the welcome of his family.

Chronologically, Pharaoh's invitation to Egypt follows Joseph's invitation since the text never indicates that Joseph makes Pharaoh aware of his invitation since no Egyptian was present when Joseph revealed his identity to his brothers.

In gratitude to Joseph and his service in saving the nation of Egypt, Pharaoh independently extends an invitation to Joseph's family to live in Egypt.

“Pharaoh” is the proper noun *par`oh* (hu)r+P^ (Hebrew: par-o) (English: phay-row), which means, “great house” and was the title of the kings of Egypt until 323 B.C. The term was originally used to describe the palace of the king but around 1500 B.C. this term was applied to the Egyptian kings and meant something like “his honor, his majesty.”

The title “the king of Egypt” is synonymous with the designation “Pharaoh” who during the time of Joseph's imprisonment would have been Sesostris II (1897-1878 B.C.) and whose dreams Joseph interpreted and whom he served as prime minister.

The “Pharaoh” or the “king of Egypt” who invited Jacob and his family to settle in Goshen, the garden spot of Egypt would have been Sesostris III (1878-1853 B.C.). Sesostris II died precisely at the end of the seven year period of prosperity and his successor Sesostris III began his reign with the seven year period of famine according to the chronology accepted by the *Cambridge Ancient History* and cited by Eugene H. Merrill (*Kingdom of Priests*, page 50, Baker Book House).

“Servants” is the noun *`evedh* (db#u#) (eh-ved), which does “not” refer to a slave who is in bondage to another against his will but rather refers to Pharaoh's advisers and officials in his cabinet who helped him in deciding state affairs. Not only was Pharaoh pleased at the reunion of Joseph and his family but also the officials in Pharaoh's cabinet who helped Pharaoh decide state affairs, which indicates that Joseph was well respected by the entire government of Egypt because he saved the nation of Egypt from being destroyed by famine.

The reunion between Joseph and his family pleased Pharaoh and his cabinet since they all greatly respected Joseph for his service in delivering the nation of Egypt from famine and also because it demonstrated proof that Joseph came from such a noble and wealthy family of free nomads and was in fact, not born a slave. Joseph was the top celebrity in Egypt because of his service to the nation in delivering it from starvation, thus his every move was of interest to the citizens of the nation, especially, this reunion with his family.

Genesis 45:17-18

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.’”

In Genesis 45:10, Joseph invites his brothers to move their families and father to be near him in Goshen whereas in Genesis 45:17-18, Pharaoh’s invitation is more extravagant in that he offers Joseph’s family “the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat of the fat of the land.”

Again, Pharaoh’s offer expresses his gratitude for Joseph in delivering his nation from famine and also his great respect for Joseph.

Pharaoh’s invitation is communicated through Joseph because he does not speak Hebrew like Joseph.

“Beasts” is the noun *b`ir* (ryU!B+) (beh-ere), which is a general term denoting domesticated four-footed animals useful for work and transportation of people and goods and thus refers to oxen, donkeys or camels who would have this function.

Pharaoh’s offer “I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land” means that he is offering Joseph’s family the best land for agriculture (Compare Isaiah 1:19) and this can be inferred by Israel’s later references to it (See Numbers 20:5; Psalm 78:47) (Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis, A Commentary*, page 571, Zondervan).

Notice that unlike Joseph, Pharaoh does not specify the pasturelands of Goshen, which indicates that Pharaoh is unaware that Joseph’s family are shepherds in need specifically of pastureland.

Genesis 45:19

“Now you are ordered, ‘Do this: take wagons from the land of Egypt for your little ones and for your wives, and bring your father and come.’”

To emphasize the sincerity of his gracious offer, Pharaoh commands Joseph’s family to migrate to Egypt in order to enjoy the agriculture and products of Egypt. Pharaoh orders are an official

authorization to take equipment from Egypt to move Joseph’s family from Canaan, thus assigning a special status to Joseph’s family as ward of the king of Egypt.

Henry M. Morris commenting on the wagons, writes, “The ‘wagons’ were essentially carts, usually on two wooden wheels, drawn by oxen or horses. This is the first mention of wagons in the Bible and suggests that they were essentially unique to Egypt at that time” (*The Genesis Record*, page 624, Baker Book House).

Genesis 45:20

“Do not concern yourselves with your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.”

“Goods” is the noun *k`li* (y!K+) (kel-ee), which denotes a wide variety of vessels that can be for household use or trade or used to store a variety of objects ranging from food to documents and can include various types of implements and equipment.

The phrase “the best of all the land of Egypt” is connected with the expression “your goods,” thus Pharaoh is saying do not be afraid to leave behind your personal possessions that will delay you and make the trip difficult since I will give you the best material possessions of Egypt such as houses and furnishings.

Pharaoh is saying that the best material possessions of Egypt would be at the disposal of the Israelites to recompense them for what must be left behind. Again, Pharaoh is dealing very graciously with Joseph’s family out of gratitude to Joseph for his service to the nation of Egypt in delivering it from the great famine.

Pharaoh’s gracious invitation to Joseph’s family just as Joseph’s promotion to prime minister of Egypt illustrates the spiritual principle taught in Proverbs 21:1.

Proverbs 21:1, “The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the LORD; He turns it wherever He wishes.”

Unwittingly, Pharaoh’s gracious invitation to Joseph’s family is another step in fulfilling the prophecy the Lord gave to Abraham that his descendants would be slaves in Egypt for over

four hundred years, which is recorded in Genesis 15.

In Genesis 45:9-11, we see Joseph commanding his brothers to communicate to their father his counsel that their family migrate to Egypt in order to escape the famine that would continue for another five years. This was the first step in fulfilling the prophecy the Lord gave to Abraham, which is recorded in Genesis 15.

Genesis 15:12, 13

“Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him.”

“God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.’”

“Your descendants” is a reference to the nation of Israel and the “land” in which the nation of Israel would be strangers in and would be enslaved to and oppressed for four hundred years is Egypt.

“Four hundred years” is a “round” number for the more precise figure of four hundred thirty years appears in Exodus 12:40-41; Acts 7:6; Gal. 3:16-17.

Genesis 15:14, “But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.”

“I will judge the nation (Egypt)” is a reference to the Lord judging Pharaoh and the nation of Egypt through the ten plagues for not letting Israel leave as God had commanded Pharaoh as recorded in Exodus 6-14.

Genesis 15:15, 16

“As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age.”

“Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.”

“They” is a reference to Abram’s descendants, namely, the Israelites who will return from the slavery of Egypt to the land promised to Abram and his descendants.

“Generation” is the noun *dor* (רִדָּה) (dore), which denotes a “cycle of time, a life span,” which in the context of Genesis 15 is calculated to be one hundred years since Abram had his first child at one hundred years of age (Gen. 21:5). Therefore, the “fourth generation” indicates that after four hundred years Abram’s descendants, i.e., the nation of Israel would come back into to the land of Canaan promised to Abram by the Lord.

Exodus 6:16-26 records that it was exactly in the fourth generation that the children of Israel left Egypt and returned to Canaan.

The “Amorite” is a figure of speech called “synecdoche of the part” where a part is put for the whole, thus the term “the Amorite” is put for the ten nations listed in Genesis 15:19-21, of which “the Amorite” was a part of (cf. Gen. 48:22; Nm. 13:29; 21:21).

Therefore since Pharaoh’s invitation was the first step in fulfilling the prophecy given to Abraham in Genesis 15, this event is also a manifestation of the spiritual principle taught in Jeremiah 1:12, that the Lord watches over His Word to perform it.

Jeremiah 1:12, “Then the LORD said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over My word to perform it.’”

Genesis 45:21-24 records Joseph giving provisions, gifts and a warning to his brothers before they depart Egypt for Canaan.

Genesis 45:21

“Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them wagons according to the command of Pharaoh, and gave them provisions for the journey.”

The statement “Then the sons of Israel did so” indicates that Joseph’s family accepted Pharaoh’s invitation to live in Egypt and that Joseph obeyed Pharaoh’s command to equip Joseph’s family with wagons for the journey from Canaan to Egypt. This is also a summary statement and the details are recorded in the rest of the verse.

The designation “the sons of Israel” emphasizes the national identity of Israel/Jacob’s sons and not their personal identity as Jacob’s sons. The nation of Israel was in its infancy at this time and this trip to Egypt would lead to their deliverance from the

famine and relocation to Egypt for over four hundred years. The brothers will enter Egypt as a nation in its infancy whereas their descendants will leave four hundred years later as a powerful nation.

The term “provisions” refers to food that was provided for Joseph’s family for their journey to and from Egypt.

Genesis 45:22

“To each of them he gave changes of garments, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver and five changes of garments.”

Joseph continues to test his brothers to be sure there was no trace of jealousy left in their hearts by giving each of his half-brothers changes of garments but to Benjamin he gave 300 pieces of silver and five changes of garments.

Joseph’s brothers have learned the lesson of God’s sovereign grace and no longer get jealous over preferential treatment given to Rachel’s sons as demonstrated in that even after Joseph gave Benjamin five times as much food (See Genesis 43:34), they were still willing to be enslaved for him (See Genesis 44:13).

Jealousy is a mental attitude sin directed toward another, which is resentful, intolerant and suspicious of another’s success, possessions or relationships and is vigilant in maintaining or guarding something.

Jealousy is demonic since it originated in eternity past with Satan who was resentful and intolerant suspicious of the preincarnate Christ’s relationship with the angels and was vigilant in maintaining or guarding his influence over the angels, therefore, jealousy is demonic since it is Satanic viewpoint (See James 3:13-16).

Jealousy is also included in the list of sins produced by the old sin nature in both the believer and unbeliever (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Titus 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1). Jealousy leads to murder (Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:20) and to inordinate ambition and competition (Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4).

Joseph’s brothers are not jealous of Benjamin like they were towards Joseph since they have been disciplined and trained by the Lord through providential circumstances and through the

conscience of each brother for selling Joseph into slavery that it is against the will of God to be jealous towards another.

God the Holy Spirit has rebuked and disciplined Joseph’s brothers through providential circumstances and through the conscience of each brother for selling Joseph into slavery in order to advance all of them to further spiritual growth. This discipline was a demonstration of the Lord’s love for Joseph’s brothers.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting adversity, trials, and irritations to come into their lives that are beyond their capacity to handle in order to get their attention and to focus upon their number one priority in life as children of God, which is conformity to the Father’s will.

God disciplines His disobedient children by permitting them to reap the fruits of their bad decisions so that they might learn that conformity to His will is the only way to true joy and happiness and blessing in life (Ezek. 16:43; Gal. 6:7-8).

Galatians 6:7, 8

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”

“For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

The Holy Spirit disciplines the disobedient child of God by rebuking them with the Word of God as it is communicated by the pastor-teacher in the local assembly and the purpose of such rebuke is to conform the believer to the will of his heavenly Father, which results in blessing and true happiness.

2 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

Hebrews 4:12, “The Word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit, and of the joints and the

marrow, and is a critic of thoughts and intents of the heart.”

The Lord Jesus Christ disciplines the believer in the sense that He rebukes, punishes and trains the believer because He personally and affectionately loves the believer.

Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.”

Revelation 3:20-21 teaches that the Lord disciplines us not only because He loves us and but also because He wants to reward us.

Revelation 3:20, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.”

Revelation 3:21, “He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

Just as any good father disciplines his children because he loves them, so God the Father disciplines His children because He loves them. If God did not train us when we are obedient and punishes us when we are disobedient, then we would be illegitimate children, thus divine discipline in the sense of punishment and training is the mark of a child of God.

Hebrews 12:5-10

“and you have forgotten the exhortation, which is addressed to you as sons, ‘MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM.’”

“FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.”

“It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”

“But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

“Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?”

“For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness.”

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Hebrews 12:10 teaches us that ultimately, God disciplines us because He wants us to share in His character, which is meant by the phrase “share His holiness.”

We are not to get angry or bitter when God disciplines us through the Word, or adversity and underserved suffering but rather we are to listen to what God is trying to say to us and to learn the lesson that He is teaching us so that we might acquire the character of our heavenly Father.

Proverbs 3:11-12, “My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD or loathe His reproof, for whom the LORD loves He reproveth, even as a father corrects the son in whom he delights.”

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on Joseph’s gift of clothing to his brothers, writes, “Clothing is an important symbol in the Joseph story (cf. 37:3, 31-33; 38:14, 19; 39:12-18; 41:14, 42). Here it functions as a fitting token of Joseph’s affection and esteem for his brothers (cf. 2 Kings 5:5, 22), for it stands in striking contrast to their stripping his robe off him (see 37:23)...The change also symbolizes their new situation (cf. 38:14; 41:14, 42): delivered from guilt, hostility, and famine, with the prospect of abundant provisions in the best of Egypt” (Genesis, A Commentary, page 572, Zondervan).

Nahum M. Sarna writes, “Since an article of apparel had featured prominently in the tale of hostility between Joseph and his brothers, it is only fitting that their reconciliation should be marked by a gift of apparel” (The JPS Torah Commentary, page 311, The Jewish Publication Society).

The term “silver” is reiterated twenty times in the account of Joseph and his brothers in Egypt that appears in Genesis 42-45 since Joseph’s brothers sold him into slavery for twenty pieces of silver. Joseph’s gift of silver to Benjamin is significant since Joseph was sold by his brothers to the Midianites for twenty pieces of silver whereas now Joseph uses the silver to bless his brother and not sell him.

Genesis 45:23

“To his father he sent as follows: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and sustenance for his father on the journey.”

“The best things of Egypt” denotes a wide variety of vessels that can be for household use or trade or used to store a variety of objects ranging from food to documents and can include various types of implements and equipment. With this gift, Joseph is honoring his father and expressing his deep personal love and affection for his father.

Exodus 20:12, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

Genesis 45:24

“So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, ‘Do not quarrel on the journey.’”

The prohibition “do not quarrel on the journey” reveals that Joseph understood the principle that all men have a sin nature.

Every person born into the world without exception received the imputation of Adam’s original sin in the Garden of Eden, thus giving everyone the nature of Adam, which is always disobedient to God, making them all physically alive but spiritually dead, having no capacity whatsoever to have a relationship with God.

Romans 5:12, “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (when Adam sinned).”

But the fact that every member of the human race possesses a sin nature does mean that the entire human race is qualified for grace, which is all that

God is free to do in imparting unmerited blessings to anyone who trusts in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior.

Galatians 3:22, “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Romans 11:32, “For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy to all.”

In the New Testament, the old sin nature is called the “old self, the flesh,” which according to the Scriptures is being corrupted meaning that it is not getting better nor can it be rehabilitated but rather it is getting worse and worse everyday.

The old sin nature resides in the genetic structure of the human body and this is why the apostle Paul in Romans 6:6 calls it the “body of sin” and this is why we need a resurrection body.

The nature of Adam tempts the soul of every human being to sin against God and when a person obeys the sin nature’s desires, it produces personal sins-mental, verbal and overt.

1 Peter 2:11, “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

The Father solved the problem of our old sin nature when He crucified our old sin nature with Christ at the cross and gave us the nature of Christ at the moment of salvation.

Romans 6:6, “knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin.”

We, as believers are to accept by faith the fact that we have been crucified with Christ and raised with Him by considering ourselves dead to the sin nature but alive to God because of our union with Christ Jesus. In order to experience victory over the sin nature, the believer must obey the teaching of the Holy Spirit that the believer has been crucified with Christ and raised with Christ.

Romans 6:11, “Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

The believer sins because he chooses to disobey the teaching of the Word of God that his sin nature was crucified with Christ at the Cross and thus allows the sin nature to control and influence his soul so that he produces mental, verbal and overt acts of sin.

The believer's sin nature will not be totally eradicated until he physically dies or when the rapture of the church takes place when the believer will receive a resurrection body to replace the body he now has, which contains the old sin nature.

1 Corinthians 15:53, "For this perishable must put on the imperishable, and this mortal must put on immortality."

Genesis 45:24

"So he sent his brothers away, and as they departed, he said to them, 'Do not quarrel on the journey.'"

This prohibition would prevent his brothers from making recriminations against one another regarding their selling Joseph into slavery, especially when explaining it to their father. Joseph wants to prevent his brothers from placing the blame on each other like Reuben did in Genesis 42:22.

The prohibition "do not quarrel on the journey" implies that Joseph expects his brothers to forgive one another just as he has forgiven them (See Matthew 18:21-35).

Now, we come to the end of our study of Genesis 45 by noting verses 25-28, which records Jacob's sons informing him that Joseph is alive.

Genesis 45:25

"Then they went up from Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to their father Jacob."

The fact that nothing significant was recorded on the journey home implies that Joseph's brothers obeyed his prohibition to not quarrel with each other on the way home. The journey back home covered a distance of approximately 250-300 miles since Jacob was living in Hebron and Joseph's headquarters would have been near the city of Memphis, which is about 10 miles south of

the present city of Cairo, thus, the journey back home would have taken approximately 3 weeks.

Genesis 45:26

"They told him, saying, 'Joseph is still alive, and indeed he is ruler over all the land of Egypt.' But he was stunned, for he did not believe them."

"They told" is the verb *naghadh* (dg^n*) (naw-gad), which is in the hiphil form and means, "to inform" and refers to revealing previously unknown information to someone, thus Jacob's sons provided him information regarding Joseph that was of course unknown to him since he presumed Joseph dead.

The expression "he is ruler over all the land of Egypt" is a reference to Pharaoh's statement "See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt" in Genesis 41:40, which means that Pharaoh conferred upon Joseph total authority in the task of administrating the nation of Egypt and would only be under Pharaoh's authority.

In obedience to Joseph's request, his brothers present their eyewitness testimony concerning the fact that Joseph is ruler over all the land of Egypt. Joseph knew that the message that his brothers will convey to their father will seem incredible to their father since he believes that Joseph is dead. Therefore, in Genesis 45:12, we read where Joseph emphasized to his half-brothers and lone full brother that they are eyewitnesses to the fact that he is now the lord of all Egypt.

In Genesis 45:12, the statement "Behold your eyes see...that it is my mouth, which is speaking to you" emphasizes the personal eyewitness testimony of Joseph's half-brothers, the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah who were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

In case, Israel does not believe the testimony of the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah because of their past conduct, Joseph also offers Benjamin as an eyewitness whose testimony would be beyond reproach in the eyes of his father since Benjamin was his favorite.

Joseph's statement "the eyes of my brother Benjamin see...that it is my mouth, which is

speaking to you” emphasizes that his lone full brother, Benjamin is a personal eyewitness to the fact that he is now the lord of all Egypt and will lend credibility to the eyewitness testimony of the sons of Leah, Bilhah and Zilpah.

The expression “he is ruler over all the land of Egypt” is in obedience to Joseph’s request that he made of his brothers in Genesis 45:13, “Now you must tell my father of all my splendor in Egypt, and all that you have seen” which emphasizes to his brothers that their knowledge of his situation is not derived from rumor but from firsthand knowledge.

“Splendor” is the noun *kavodh* (dW)dK*) (kaw-vode), which refers to Joseph’s position of authority, the honor given to him, his reputation and respect paid to him by the people of Egypt and his prestige in Egypt. Therefore, Joseph stressed with his brothers the importance that they give testimony to their father as to his position, authority, and prestige in Egypt in order to convince their father to believe Joseph’s message to their father to relocate to Egypt and that he truly has the means to support their family in Egypt.

The purpose of communicating this information about Joseph to their father is not to be self-glorification on Joseph’s part but to convince their father that Joseph possesses sufficient resources and power to execute that which he has planned for the family. Joseph wanted his brothers to communicate to their father that he has a position of power and authority, which enables him to provide for his family and to accomplish his plan. Therefore, we see Joseph’s brothers obeying his request to communicate to their father his glory in Egypt.

“He was stunned” is composed of the verb *pugh* (gWP) (poog), which means, “to become weak, numb” and the noun *lev* (bl@) (lave), “heart” and the 3rd person masculine singular pronominal suffix, which means, “his.”

The verb *pugh* denotes the state of physical responses to emotional exhaustion. Therefore, this expression in the Hebrew text literally means that Jacob’s heart became numb upon hearing the news that Joseph was still alive and was in fact the prime minister of Egypt and the very man that they had feared. After twenty-two years of

mourning over the death of Joseph it was hard to believe that he was still alive.

Genesis 45:27

“When they told him all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them, and when he saw the wagons that Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of their father Jacob revived.”

The statement “when they told him (Jacob) all the words of Joseph that he had spoken to them (Joseph’s brothers)” is a reference to Joseph’s conversation with his brothers where he requested that his brothers convey to their father their personal eyewitness testimony to the fact that he is the lord over all of Egypt.

The appearance of the wagons, which were unique to Egypt at that time convinced Jacob that his sons were telling him the truth that Joseph was indeed still alive and ruler over the entire land of Egypt.

Henry M. Morris commenting on the wagons, writes, “The ‘wagons’ were essentially carts, usually on two wooden wheels, drawn by oxen or horses. This is the first mention of wagons in the Bible and suggests that they were essentially unique to Egypt at that time” (The Genesis Record, page 624, Baker Book House).

“Spirit” is the noun *ruach* (jWr) (roo-akh), which refers to the human spirit of Jacob/Israel, which is received along with eternal life at the moment of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone.

Eternal life and a human spirit are received at the moment of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. Eternal life resides in the human spirit and is the very life of God, having no beginning and no end so therefore unbelievers do not have a human spirit since they do not possess eternal life due to their rejection of Christ as Savior (See John 3:1-18; 1 Corinthians 2:1-16).

The believer receives a human spirit at the moment of salvation through regeneration, thus making him “trichotomous” in the sense that he has a body, soul and human spirit. Jacob’s human spirit was revived in the sense that he began to once again live in the eternal life that God had given him, which is indicated in Genesis 45:28 by the narrator’s use of the name “Israel” rather than “Jacob.”

Jacob's short prayer recorded in Genesis 43:13-14 has been answered. In Genesis 43:13-14, Jacob prayed "Take your brother also, and arise, return to the man and may God Almighty grant you compassion in the sight of the man, so that he will release to you your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved."

Not only did Jacob get Simeon and Benjamin back but also Joseph, which is an illustration of a spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Genesis 45:28

"Then Israel said, 'It is enough; my son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'"

Victor Hamilton commenting on Genesis 45:25-28, makes the following insightful comment, he writes, "Only one item is recorded in vv. 25-28 about the brothers' return to Jacob: Joseph is still living! Once he hears that, Jacob has little concern about the new clothes, Benjamin's purse, or even the grain carried by the animals. In chapter 37 Jacob did believe his sons when they were lying to him. In chapter 45 Jacob disbelieves his sons when they are being truthful with him. Bad news he accepts; good news he rejects. Jacob's response on hearing that Joseph is alive is parallel to the response of the disciples when they were told that Jesus was alive-shock, unbelief, which eventually turns to uncontrollable joy. The sons' lengthy conversation with Jacob about Joseph (v. 27a) and the sighting of the wagons (v. 27b) provide prima facie evidence for Jacob that Joseph was indeed alive. No longer did he need to pinch himself to see if he was dreaming (v. 27c). The sons might have been making up the story about Joseph, but the wagons supply irrefutable confirmation of the authenticity of their story, more so than the clothing or the three hundred shekels. Now convinced that Joseph is alive, Jacob resolves to go down to Egypt immediately" (The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50, ed. R. K. Harrison,

Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Erdmann's Publishing Co., 1995, page 587).

Notice that in Genesis 45:25 and 27, the name "Jacob" is used by the narrator but in Genesis 45:28, the name "Israel" is employed, which is significant.

The name "Jacob" means, "heel catcher" (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a "deceiver" and a "supplanter," which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

"Israel" is the proper noun *yisra'el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, "one who fights and overcomes with the power of God" since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed.

The name *yisra'el*, "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

The name "Jacob" reflects character produced by the function of the power of the old sin nature and walking in unbelief in the promises of God whereas the name "Israel" reflects character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer and walking by means of faith.

When Israel/Jacob agrees to migrate to Egypt, he was fulfilling yet another step toward the fulfillment of the prophecy the Lord gave Abraham in a dream that his descendants would be enslaved in Egypt for over four hundred years, and which prophecy is recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Henry M. Morris commenting on the story of Joseph and his brothers, makes the following excellent comment, he writes, "There is no greater example in the Bible of God's gracious watch and care over His own. A multiplicity of seemingly accidental and unrelated events-events which seemed to be ugly and difficult at the time-is gradually woven together by an unseen divine hand into a glorious tapestry in which every portion is ideally situated in its proper and unique place. To believers going through sufferings and reverses, undeserved and unexplained, the story of Joseph has always given assurance of ultimate

understanding with the believer discovering a greater good and God receiving a greater glory that could ever have been possible without them” (The Genesis Record, page 626, Baker Book House).

All the events that took place in the story of Joseph and his brothers, which are recorded in Genesis 37-45, were figured by God into the divine decree so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself. The divine decree is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history—past, present and future and so therefore, God rendered certain to take place all the events in the lives of Joseph and his brothers that are recorded in Genesis 37-45.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God’s eternal and immutable will. Therefore, all the events in the lives of Joseph and his brothers, which are recorded in Genesis 37-45 were a part of God’s plan from eternity past.

The “providence” of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God’s glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, all the events that took place in the lives of Joseph and his brothers, which are recorded in Genesis 37-45 did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for them to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob’s family and to bring glory to Himself.

Genesis 46

Genesis 46 is divided into five sections: (1) Israel/Jacob worships God at Beersheba and seeks His guidance (46:1). (2) Israel/Jacob receives a theophany, divine reassurance and promises (46:2-4). (3) Israel’s family migrates to Egypt (46:5-7). (4) Genealogy of the Israelites who migrated to Egypt (46:8-27). (5) Joseph reunites with his father and prepares his family to meet Pharaoh (46:28-34).

Let’s begin to note the first section of this chapter, which presents to us the record of Israel worshipping God at Beersheba and receiving a

theophany and receiving reassurance from God regarding his move to Egypt as well as promises.

Notice that in Genesis 45:25 and 27, the name “Jacob” is used by the narrator but in Genesis 45:28 and 46:1-2, the name “Israel” is employed, which is significant.

The name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy.

“Israel” is the proper noun *yisra’el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” and memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

Just as the name “Jacob” reflects character produced by the function of the power of the old sin nature so the name “Israel” reflects character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer. However, in Genesis 46, the name “Jacob” does “not” signify that the patriarch is living in his old Adamic sin nature since he sought God’s guidance on the move to Egypt but rather the name signifies the patriarch’s weakness and dependence upon God’s power and provision and protection. It indicates that the patriarch is living according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-11 that God’s power is manifested in human weakness or impotence.

2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

Genesis 46:1

“So Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.”

“Journeyed” is the verb *nasa`* (us^n*) (naw-saw), which means, “to pull up” stakes that stabilize a tent and is a technical term for “breaking camp.”

Genesis 35:27 and 37:14 reveal that Israel and his family departed Hebron, which is 20 miles northeast of Beersheba.

The name “Beersheba” means, “well of seven” or “well of oath” and bears witness to the treaty between Abraham and Abimelech and Abraham’s right to the well (See Genesis 26:26-33).

“Beersheba” was located in the flat southern part of the Negev, which extends roughly from a line drawn from Gaza through the modern political boundary of the southern West Bank, extending south to the mountain ranges of the Sinai and through the Arabah to the Red Sea.

“Beersheba” is the end of the Promised Land and was the place that Jacob departed when fleeing from Esau (See Genesis 28:10).

Genesis 26:23-25 records that Isaac built an altar at “Beersheba” in order to worship the Lord in prayer. Therefore, we see Israel offering sacrifices to God at this altar at “Beersheba” in order to worship the Lord in prayer and seek out confirmation that it is according to the will of God that his family migrate to Egypt and if so, ask for protection during the journey to Egypt while residing there.

“Offered” is the verb *zavach* (jḇʿz*) (zaw-vakh), which means, “to sacrifice, slaughter,” which portrayed the crucifixion and death of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross.

“Sacrifices” is the noun *zevach* (jḇʿz#) (zeh-vakh), which refers to the animals that were slaughtered or sacrificed, which portrayed the impeccable human nature of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The animal sacrifices that Israel offered to God portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross, which Israel looked forward to in faith. The death of Christ on the Cross made possible Israel’s eternal covenant relationship with God as well as fellowship with God and worshipping God. Therefore, Israel presented these animal sacrifices to God indicating that he recognized and accepted by faith that his eternal covenant relationship with God and his privilege in approaching God in prayer to worship Him was based solely upon the merits of Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.”

When, we as church age believers pray “in Jesus name” we are acknowledging that we can only approach the Father boldly in prayer based upon the merits of Jesus Christ and His death on the Cross and our eternal union with Him (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17).

John 16:23, “In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you.”

In Genesis 46:1, Israel is approaching God the Father in prayer since all prayer must be addressed to the Father (John 14:13-14; 16:23-27; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 2:18; 3:14; 5:20; Col. 1:3, 12; 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 1:6). Prayer must be made in the name or Person of or through intermediate agency of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:13-14; 16:23-24; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17). Prayer must be made by means of the power of the Filling of the Spirit (Eph. 2:18; 6:18; Jude 20).

Prayer is an expression of the believer’s worship toward God, as well as an expression of his confidence and total dependence upon the character and integrity of his heavenly Father to meet both the spiritual and temporal needs of himself and others.

In Genesis 46:1, Israel is worshipping God the Father in prayer in response to the revelation that his beloved Joseph is not dead but alive in Egypt and is in fact, the ruler over all the land of Egypt.

There are four English words, “reverence,” “respect,” “awe,” and “wonder,” which express the concept of worshipping God.

Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun “reverence”: “A feeling or attitude of deep respect tinged with awe; veneration.”

Therefore, paraphrasing this definition we would say that Israel’s response to the fact that Joseph was not dead but still alive as the ruler of Egypt was to possess an attitude of deep respect and awe for the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "respect": "esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or trait, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or trait."

Israel's response to the revelation that Joseph was still alive was to esteem the excellence of the Person of God as manifested through His personal qualities or attributes such as love, faithfulness, mercy, compassion, justice, righteousness, truth, omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, immutability, and sovereignty.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "awe": "an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, fear, etc. produced by that which is grand, sublime, extremely powerful or the like."

Israel's response to the revelation that Joseph was not dead but in fact was still alive as the ruler over all of Egypt and was going to see him again was to possess an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration for the Lord.

Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary defines the noun "wonder": "to be filled with admiration, amazement or awe; marvel."

Israel's response to the revelation that Joseph was not dead but alive as the ruler of Egypt was one of being filled with admiration, amazement and awe.

Warren Wiersbe writes, "True wonder reaches right into your heart and mind and shakes you up. It not only has depth, it has value; it enriches your life. Wonder is not cheap amusement that brings a smile to your face. It is an encounter with reality, with God, which brings awe to your heart. You're overwhelmed with an emotion that is a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear-and love. You're not looking for explanations; you're lost in the wonder of God" (Real Worship, page 43, Baker Books).

Therefore, paraphrasing this comment by Wiersbe on wonder we would say that Israel's response to the revelation that Joseph was not dead but alive as the ruler of Egypt reached right into his heart and shook him up and enriched his life.

The revelation that Joseph was in fact alive and not dead brought awe to the heart of Israel and

overwhelmed him with an emotion that was a mixture of gratitude, adoration, reverence, fear and love for the God of his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

Israel wasn't looking for explanations since he was lost in the wonder of God. Therefore, Israel offered sacrifices to God in order to approach God in prayer to worship Him in the sense that he was manifesting an attitude of deep reverence, respect and awe of God for the fact that Joseph was not dead but alive.

Psalm 68:35, "O God, You are awesome from Your sanctuary. The God of Israel Himself gives strength and power to the people. Blessed be God!"

Therefore, when Israel offered sacrifices to God, he was worshipping God and expressing his thanks to God for the fact that he was going to see Joseph once again.

Colossians 3:17, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Colossians 4:2, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving."

Hebrews 13:15, "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name."

Worship is adoring contemplation of God as He has been revealed by the Holy Spirit in the Person of Christ and in the Scriptures and is also the loving ascription of praise to God for what He is, both in Himself and in His ways and is the bowing of the soul and spirit in deep humility and reverence before Him.

Warren Wiersbe defines worship, "Worship is the believer's response of all that they are –mind, emotions, will and body-to what God is and says and does. This response has its mystical side in subjective experience and its practical side in objective obedience to God's revealed will. Worship is a loving response that's balanced by the fear of the Lord, and it is a deepening response as the believer comes to know God better" (Real Worship, 26).

If we paraphrase Wiersbe's definition, we could say the following: Israel is worshipping the Lord in that he is responding in his mind, emotions, and body to what God is and did in keeping Joseph alive and allowing him to see his beloved Joseph once again.

Psalm 2:11, "Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling."

John 4:24, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

"God" is the noun *Elohim* (<yh!Oa\$), which emphasizes the sovereignty of God, thus indicating God sovereignly intervened in the life of Israel/Jacob and his family by preserving and protecting them from famine and the corrupting Canaanite influence.

The noun *Elohim*, also expresses that God is omnipotent and was able to bring to pass that which He has determined to take place, thus the noun implies that Israel/Jacob requested that God use His omnipotence to protect him and his family from harm while making the journey to Egypt and while residing there.

Israel's actions in offering sacrifices to God implies that he was seeking confirmation from God that the move to Egypt was in accordance with His will and if so, that He would protect him and his family during the journey to Egypt and while residing there by means of His omnipotence. Therefore, not only was Israel worshipping God in prayer, giving thanks for the fact that Joseph was alive and that he would see him again but also, Israel was seeking guidance as to whether or not it was according to the will of God to leave the Promised Land, the land of Canaan and migrate to Egypt.

The divine reassurance and promises to make Israel's descendants a great nation while residing in Egypt, which are recorded in Genesis 46:2-4 confirms that Israel was seeking guidance from God on this move to Egypt.

The phrase "the God of his father Isaac" demonstrates that Israel worships the same God as his father Isaac by worshipping at the same altar his father built at Beersheba.

Genesis 46:2

"God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, 'Jacob, Jacob.' And he said, 'Here I am.'"

The fact that God spoke to Israel in visions of the night is called in theology a "theophany," which is a theological term used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26). This theophany was in the form of a vision, which was one of the means by which the Lord appeared to His people prior to His 1st Advent (See Hebrews 1:1-2).

The term "visions" indicates Israel received a visible appearance of the Son of God before His incarnation, which is called in theology, a "theophany."

Genesis 46:2-4 records an auditory appearance of the "preincarnate" Christ, which is confirmed by the context in that the Son of God speaks with Israel.

This theophany indicates that Israel/Jacob was a prophet according to Numbers 12:6.

Numbers 12:6, "He said, 'Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, shall make Myself known to him in a vision. I shall speak with him in a dream.'"

This is the seventh time that the preincarnate Christ communicated with Jacob either audibly or both visibly and audibly (1st time: Genesis 28:10-22; 2nd time: 31:3; 3rd time: 31:10-13; 4th time: 32:24-32; 5th time: 35:1; 6th time: 35:9; 7th time: 46:2).

The vision given to Abraham at night, which is recorded in Genesis 15:13-15 that prophesied that his descendants would be enslaved in a foreign land for four hundred years and God speaking to Israel "in visions of the night" symbolizes and anticipates Israel's future enslavement and mistreatment in Egypt.

"Jacob, Jacob" is a figure of speech called *epizeuxis*, which calls special attention to the solemn moment where God reassured Israel/Jacob that it was according to the will of God that he and his family migrate to Egypt and would also promise to make his descendants a great nation in Egypt.

God addresses the patriarch by his name of weakness “Jacob, Jacob” indicating that the patriarch was living according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-11 that God’s power is manifested in the believer’s human impotence.

When God addresses the patriarch as “Jacob, Jacob” it indicates that the patriarch is approaching God in prayer and is not trusting in his own power to deal with his fears of moving to Egypt but rather is depending upon the power of God.

“Here I am” is the interjection *hinneh* (hN@h!), which expresses the intimacy between Israel and God and the respect Israel had for God and demonstrates that Israel recognizes and is responsive to the Word of God.

Genesis 46:3

“He said, ‘I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.’”

In the original Hebrew text, “I am God” is composed of the personal pronoun *anokhi* (yk!n)a*) (aw-noke), “I” and the definite article *ha* (h^), “the” and the noun *el* (la!@), “God,” thus it literally reads, “I am the God.”

“God” is not the usual *Elohim* but rather the singular form of the noun, which is *El* (la@) in order to express a contrast between the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who is the one and only true God and the foreign gods of the Canaanites and the Egyptians.

God identifies Himself to Israel as “I am the God of your father” in order to reassure Israel that he will be protected by Him just as He protected his father Isaac.

The prohibition “do not be afraid to go to Egypt” that was issued to Israel/Jacob indicates that the patriarch was fearful of leaving the Promised Land.

The explanatory clause “for I will make you a great nation there” gives the reason why Israel should not be afraid and would give him assurance that it was according to the will of God that he and his family migrate to Egypt.

In Genesis 46:3, God is assuring Israel that everything is ok that he will be protected from the Egyptians and reassures him that God will make his descendants into a great nation while in Egypt in accordance with the promises God made to his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

The assurance that God gave Israel that He would make Israel’s descendants into a great nation while in Egypt is a positive declaration or guarantee from God intended to give Israel confidence and courage.

This statement “I will make you a great nation there” is a reference to the “Abrahamic” covenant since it reconfirms the promise to Abraham in Genesis 12:2 and 18:17-18 that God would make Abraham’s descendants into a great nation.

Genesis 12:2, “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

Genesis 12:3, “And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The “Abrahamic” covenant was an “unconditional” covenant meaning its fulfillment depended upon the Lord’s faithfulness and not Abraham’s.

The “Abrahamic” covenant included not only “personal” (Isaac and land of Canaan) and “national” (Israel) promises to Abraham but also contained the “universal” promise of eternal salvation to all mankind through faith in Jesus Christ who is a descendant of Isaac, the son of Abraham and Sarah.

(1) Personal: “I will bless you and make your name great” (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God. This fame and reputation is expressed in that Abraham is called a “father of a multitude” in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God’s confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

(2) National: “I will make you into a great nation” (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the nation of Israel.

(3) Spiritual and Universal: “And all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you” (Gen. 12:3) refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind (Deut. 28:8-14; Is. 60:3-5, 11, 16) since it is only through Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham’s seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19).

The phrase “and you shall be a blessing” is “not” a promise since the verb *hayah*, “you shall be” is in the “imperative” mood expressing a command and literally means, “so become a blessing” indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord’s commands.

The promises “I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse” refers to the fact that the Lord is identifying Himself with the cause of Abraham and guaranteeing protection for Abraham and his descendants.

“Nation” is the noun *goy* (yW{G}), which is in the singular referring to Abraham’s “national” posterity (Gen. 18:18), the nation of Israel that would originate from Abraham and Sarah’s son Isaac and Isaac’s son Jacob.

“Great” is the adjective *gadhol* (lw{dG*}), which refers both to numbers and to significance or impact the nation of Israel would have on both human and angelic history.

Therefore, the “national” posterity of Abraham, the nation of Israel has been a great nation in history during the reigns of David and Solomon and will be significant according to prophecy since she will be the head of the nations during the millennial reign of Christ (See Isaiah 2:1-4). Israel has had a huge impact upon human history in that she was the custodian of the Old Testament Scriptures, the recipients of the covenants of promise, the Law (Rm. 9:1-5) and the nation from which the Savior, Jesus Christ would originate (Jn. 4:22).

Prophetically, the promise “a great nation” in a “near” sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 46:4, ‘I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.’

The divine promise “I will go down with you to Egypt” echoes the Lord’s promise to Jacob “I am with you” in Genesis 28:15 and the promise made to his father Isaac “I will be with you” in Genesis 26:3. This promise is a guarantee to Jacob of the Lord’s presence in his life and that he will be protected on the journey to Egypt and while residing there and would calm his fears about migrating to Egypt.

The statement “I will also surely bring you up again” is a reference to the “Palestinian” Covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” covenant was confirmed to Isaac (Gen. 26:3-4) and Jacob (Gen. 35:12), reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The land grant under the “Palestinian” covenant: (1) Most of the land in Turkey (2) Most of East Africa (3) Saudi Arabia (4) Yemen (5) Oman and Red Sea (6) Syria (7) Iraq (8) Jordan.

The land grant has boundaries on the Mediterranean, on Aegean Sea, on Euphrates River and the Nile River.

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

The promise “I will also surely bring you up again” is “national” promise in that it is a guarantee that the Israelites will return to the land of Canaan. It is a “personal” promise in that it is a guarantee that Israel himself would return to the

land of Canaan not only in a coffin (See Genesis 49:29-32) but more importantly that he and all of born again Israel will live in the Promised Land in resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ.

In the original Hebrew text, the divine promise “Joseph will close your eyes” literally says, “Joseph, he will place his hand upon your eyes.”

Nahum Sarna commenting on this expression, writes that it is “a reference to the custom that the eldest son or nearest relative would gently close the eyes of the deceased. Such has remained time-honored Jewish practice to the present day. The promise, then, is that Joseph will outlive Jacob and will be present at the moment of his death. The promise was indeed fulfilled, as told in 49:33 and 50:1” (The JPS Torah Commentary, page 313, The Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 46:5

“Then Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob and their little ones and their wives in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him.”

The name “Jacob” does “not” signify that the patriarch is living in his old Adamic sin nature since he sought God’s guidance on the move to Egypt but rather the name signifies the patriarch’s weakness and dependence upon God’s power and provision and protection. It indicates that the patriarch is living according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-11 that God’s power is manifested in human weakness or impotence.

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

“And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

“Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults (people testing), with distresses (thought testing), with persecutions (system testing), with difficulties (disaster testing), for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

The name “Jacob” signifies the lack of confidence the patriarch has in his own strength and that he acknowledges that God is all powerful and all sufficient and that he is helpless and hopeless and totally and completely dependent upon God. It signifies that the patriarch has acknowledged his own human weakness or impotence so as to experience the power of God in life and his right to appropriate that power by prayer and claiming the divine promises given to him.

“Arose” is the verb *qum* (<WQ) (koom), which is an idiomatic expression describing a preparatory action needed to be taken so that a primary action can take place and involves preparation to change location. Therefore, the verb describes Jacob and his family preparing to leave Beersheba for Egypt.

In Genesis 46:6, the verb *bo* (@WB), “went to” is employed to describe the action of migrating from Beersheba in Canaan to Egypt.

The verb *qum*, “arose” also indicates that Jacob did not procrastinate or hesitate to leave Canaan for Egypt after receiving revelation from God that it was according to His will that he and his family move to Egypt.

Psalm 119:60, “I hastened and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

The designation “the sons of Israel” emphasizes the national identity of Israel/Jacob’s sons and not their personal identity as his sons. This designation is significant because the move from Canaan to Egypt taken by Jacob and his family had great implications for the family who were the progenitors of the twelve tribes of the nation that bore his father’s name.

The nation of Israel was in its infancy at this time and this trip to Egypt would lead to their deliverance from the famine and relocation to Egypt for over four hundred years. The brothers will enter Egypt as a nation in its infancy whereas their descendants will leave four hundred years later as a powerful nation.

The “wagons” used to transport Jacob, his grandchildren and the women were carts, usually on two wooden wheels, drawn by oxen or horses and were unique to Egypt at that time.

Genesis 46:6-7

“They took their livestock and their property, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and came to Egypt, Jacob and all his descendants with him: his sons and his grandsons with him, his daughters and his granddaughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.”

“Livestock” is the noun *miqneh* (חנ#q+m!), which refers sheep and goats.

“Property” is the noun *r^ekhush* (vWkr+) (rek-oosh), which refers to “possessions.”

“Acquired” is the verb *rakhash* (vk^r*) (raw-kash), which is correctly translated and in context refers to all the property and livestock that Jacob and his sons had “acquired” during their stay in the land of Canaan after leaving Laban in Paddan Aram.

Even though Pharaoh offered Jacob and his family “the best of all the land of Egypt” (See Genesis 45:20) meaning that the best material possessions of Egypt would be at the disposal of the Israelites, Jacob and his family do not presume upon Pharaoh’s hospitality and regarded their possessions as gifts from God.

“Canaan” is the more ancient name of Palestine, apparently derived from Hurrian, meaning, “belonging to the land of red purple,” the dye the early Canaanites or Phoenician traders peddled far and wide. The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

“Egypt” is the proper noun *mitsrayim* (<y!r^x+m!) (mits-ra-yim), which means, “double straits.”

Genesis 10:6 records that “Mizraim” was the second son of Ham and was the ancestor of the ancient Egyptians as indicated in that his name was the customary name for Egypt in the Bible.

Most scholars divide Egypt into two sections: (1) Upper (2) Lower. Upper Egypt is very narrow and surrounded by mountains, which rarely take the form of peaks and the northern coast of Egypt is low and barren, and without good harbors.

The political history of Egypt traditionally begins with Menes, the Upper ruler who conquered Lower Egypt according to Egyptian tradition. The history of dynastic Egypt can be divided into the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 B.C.), the Middle Kingdom (2100-1800 B.C.) and the New Kingdom (1550-1069 B.C.). The pyramids were built during the Old Kingdom and the Middle Kingdom coincides with the lives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph whereas the birth of Moses and Exodus of Israel took place during the New Kingdom.

The emphasis upon the all-inclusive nature of the migration of Jacob and his family is designed to draw attention to the national significance of the event.

The expression “his descendants” that is mentioned twice in Genesis 46:6-7 refers to Jacob’s direct descendants who left Canaan with him, which would include his children and grandchildren for a total of sixty-six people. This expression would exclude daughters-in-law, servants and wives of his sons, which is confirmed by the expression “his (Jacob’s) direct descendants” that appears in the statement recorded in Genesis 46:26.

Also, the expression “his descendants” would “not” include all the daughters and granddaughters of Jacob. The reason for this is that the female children of a family were often not recorded since Jewish genealogies followed the male line of descent, unless, the woman played a significant part in the plan of God such as Dinah (See Genesis 34).

The expression “his descendants” is also a reference to the promise that the Lord gave Jacob at Bethel before departing for Paddan Aram, which is recorded in Genesis 28:14 that Jacob’s descendants “will also be like the dust of the earth.”

“His sons” refers to Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Dan, Naphtali and Benjamin for a total of eleven since Joseph was in Egypt.

The expression “his grandsons” refers to not only Jacob’s grandsons but also his great-grandsons since four great grandsons of Jacob were included

in the list that appears in Genesis 46:6-27 of Jacob's direct descendants who left Canaan.

The term for "grandsons" in the original Hebrew text literally reads, "sons of his sons," which can be used for "great grandsons."

"Daughters" is the noun *bath* (tB^) and depending upon the context in which the word is used it can refer to not only a "daughter" but also a "granddaughter," a "daughter-in-law" and even to a "sister" as in Genesis 34:17.

Since the term "his descendants" refers to Jacob's offspring, his children and grandchildren, the term "daughters" would exclude Jacob's "daughters-in-law" since they were not his direct descendants.

The term "daughters" would "not" refer to Jacob's "granddaughters" since they are mentioned immediately after this word demonstrating the writer was making a distinction between the daughters of Jacob and his granddaughters. Therefore, it appears that the term "daughters" in Genesis 46:6-7 indicates that Jacob had other daughters other than Dinah whose births and names are not mentioned.

In Genesis 46:8-27, the only daughter mentioned is Dinah and the only granddaughter is Serah and yet in Genesis 46:6-7, we have the plural nouns "daughters" and "granddaughters."

Again, as we noted earlier, the reason for this is that the female children of a family were often not recorded since Jewish genealogies followed the male line of descent. There are exceptions to this rule as we noted earlier in that a woman would be mentioned in the genealogy if she played a significant part in the plan of God or Israel's history such as with Dinah (See Genesis 34). The mention of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, is an exception to this rule and does not imply that Jacob did not have other daughters by either of his wives or their handmaids. Dinah is mentioned because of her rape, which led to her brothers killing all the men of Shechem (See Genesis 34).

Acts 7:14 records that seventy-five people went to Egypt since Stephen omits Jacob, Joseph and Joseph's two sons but includes the nine wives of Jacob's twelve sons, Judah and Simeon's wives had died and Joseph's wife was in Egypt (See Genesis 38; 46:10). This is confirmed by the

expression "his (Jacob's) direct descendants" that appears in the statement recorded in Genesis 46:26.

Genesis 46:8-27 contains the genealogy of the Israelites who migrated to Egypt from Canaan.

There are ten points that we must note that are essential in order to understand the purpose for this genealogy:

- (1) This is a "segmented" genealogy meaning that it displays the existing relationships between the members of Jacob's family.
- (2) Numbers 26 and 1 Chronicles 2-8 contain genealogical lists, which parallel Genesis 46:8-27 and Exodus 6 partially parallels it.
- (3) The genealogical lists that parallel (1 Chronicles 2-8, Numbers 26 and Exodus 6) the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27 contain slight differences but this is only to be expected and does not in any way affect the reliability of the accounts.
- (4) A comparison of these genealogical lists indicates that certain of the names found above were in circulation also in another form, usually pretty much like the ones above, sometimes radically different as to form but similar in meaning.
- (5) Women are not included in the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27 because they are unimportant, but because it does not fit the purpose of the listing. The female children of a family were often not recorded since Jewish genealogies followed the male line of descent. There are exceptions to this rule as we noted earlier in that a woman would be mentioned in the genealogy if she played a significant part in the plan of God or Israel's history such as with Dinah (See Genesis 34). The mention of Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah, is an exception to this rule and does not imply that Jacob did not have other daughters by either of his wives or their handmaids.
- (6) The expression "the sons of Israel" (verse 8) must be taken in the broader sense of "the descendants of Israel," for more than his sons are named, and thus some of those named may not have been born at the time Jacob and his descendants went down to Egypt.

(7) The term “sons” refers to not only Jacob’s sons and grandsons but also his great-grandsons since four great grandsons of Jacob were included in the list that appears in Genesis 46:6-27 of Jacob’s direct descendants who left Canaan.

(8) All the individuals named in Numbers 26 as heads of tribes or families are found in this listing of descendants in Genesis 46 because Moses did not intend to name every person who went into Egypt, but rather every leader of family or clan who would come forth from Egypt, therefore the purpose of Moses in this genealogy, therefore, is selective.

(9) In the genealogy of Numbers 26, there are with slight deviations, all the grandsons and great-grandsons of Jacob whose names occur in Genesis 46:8-27, mentioned as the founders of the families, into which the twelve tribes of Israel were subdivided in Moses’ days.

(10) Acts 7:14 records that seventy-five people went to Egypt since this passage omits Jacob, Joseph and Joseph’s two sons but includes the nine wives of Jacob’s twelve sons, Judah and Simeon’s wives had died and Joseph’s wife was in Egypt (See Genesis 38; 46:10).

Genesis 46:8

“Now these are the names of the sons of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: Reuben, Jacob's firstborn.”

The context indicates that the designation “the sons of Israel” refers to the descendants of Jacob since the genealogy to follow lists the names of Jacob’s sons, grandsons and great grandsons who migrated from Canaan to Egypt with him.

In the Hebrew and Aramaic languages there is no specific word for grandson so that the word “son” can refer to any descendant down the line.

Genesis 46:9

“The sons of Reuben: Hanoch (*chanokh* [Ew{nj&} [khan-oke]

“dedicated” or “follower”) **and Pallu** (*pallu* [aWLP^] [pal-loo]

“wonderful”) **and Hezron** (*chetsron* [/W{rx+j#] [khets-rone]

“surrounded by a wall”) **and Carmi** (*karmi* [ym!r+K^] [kar-mee]

“my vineyard”).”

The four sons of Reuben that are listed here in Genesis 46:9 are identical to the lists recorded in Exodus 6:14, Numbers 26:5-6 and 1 Chronicles 5:3.

“Reuben” (/b@War+) (*r^e’uven*) (reh-oo-vane) was the first child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “behold or see, a son” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:32.

Genesis 46:10

“The sons of Simeon: Jemuel (*y^emu’el* [la@Wmy+] [yem-oo-ale]

“day of God.”) **and Jamin** (*yamin* [/ym!y*] [yaw-meen]

“right hand”) **and Ohad** (*ohadh* [dh^a]) [o-had]

“united”) **and Jachin** (*yakhin* [/yk!y*] [yaw-keen]

“he will establish”) **and Zohar** (*tsochar* [rj^x]) [tso-khar]

“tawny”) **and Shaul** (*sha’ul* [lWav*] [shaw-ool]

“desired”) **the son of a Canaanite woman.”**

“Simeon” (/w)um+v!) (*shim`on*) (shim-one) was the second child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “the Lord has heard” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:33.

“Jemuel” appears in the genealogy of Exodus 6:14 but appears as “Nemuel” in the parallel genealogies of 1 Chronicles 4:24 and Numbers 26:12 due to a difference in dialect.

“Ohad” appears in the parallel genealogy of Exodus 6:15 but does not appear in the lists found in 1 Chronicles 4:24 and Numbers 26:12 indicating that he had no descendants or that they died out.

“Zohar” appears in the genealogy of Exodus 6:15 but appears as “Zerah” in Numbers 26:13 and 1 Chronicles 4:24 and “Shaul” appears in Exodus 6:15 but does not appear in 1 Chronicles 4:24 and Numbers 26:13.

The fact that “Shaul” is mentioned as being “the son of a Canaanite woman” reflects the Holy

Spirit's dissatisfaction with the intermarriage between the covenant family of God and the Canaanites (See Genesis 9:24-27).

Genesis 46:11

“The sons of Levi: Gershon (*ger^sshon* [/w]vr+G@) [gay-resh-one]

“exile”), **Kohath** (*qohath* [th*q(I) [keh-hawth]

“assembly”), and **Merari** (*merari* [yr!r*m+] [mer-aw-ree]

“bitter”).”

“Levi” (*yw!!@*) (*lewi*) (lay-vee) was the third child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “My husband will be attached to me” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:34.

“Kohath” became the ancestor of the three great Levite families.

Genesis 46:12

“The sons of Judah: Er (*er* [ru@] [ayr]

“one who watches”) and **Onan** (*onan* [/n*w)@] [o-nawn]

“vigorous”) and **Shelah** (*shelah* [hl*v@] [shay-law]

“drawn out (of the womb)”) and **Perez** (*perets* [Jr#P#] [peh-rets]

“a bursting forth, a breach”) and **Zerah** (*zerach* [jr^z#] [zeh-rakh]

“he dawned”) (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). **And the sons of Perez were Hezron** (*chetsron* [/w{rx+j#] [khets-rone]

“surrounded by a wall”) and **Hamul** (*chamul* [lWmj*] [khaw-mool]

“spared”).”

“Judah” (*hd*Why+*) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “I will praise the Lord” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:35.

The sons of Perez are listed and not his twin brother since the ancestral lines of both King David are traced back through Perez according to Ruth 4:18-22 as well as the human nature of our

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33.

Genesis 46:13

“The sons of Issachar: Tola (*tola`* [ul*w)T] [to-law]

“worm”) and **Puvvah** (*puwah* [hw*P%] [poo-vaw]

“splendid”) and **Iob** (*yov* [bw{y} [yove]

“persecuted”) and **Shimron** (*shimron* [/w{rm+v!} [shim-rone]

“guardianship”).”

“Issachar” (*rk*CC*y!*) (yis-saw-kawr) was the fifth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, “reward” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:16-18.

“Puvvah” appears in Numbers 26:23 as “Puvah” and in 1 Chronicles 7:1 as “Puah” and “Iob” appears in 1 Chronicles 7:1 and Numbers 26:24 as “Jashub.”

Genesis 46:14

“The sons of Zebulun: Sered (*seredh* [dr#s#] [she-red]

“fear”) and **Elon** (*allon* [/w{La} [ay-lone]

“terebinth”) and **Jahleel** (*yachl^eel* [la@l+j+y^] [yakh-leh-ale]

“wait for God”).”

“Zebulun” (*/l%Wbw+*) (zeb-oo-loon) was the sixth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, “honor” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:19-20.

Genesis 46:15

“These are the sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Paddan-aram, with his daughter Dinah; all his sons and his daughters numbered thirty-three.”

“Leah” is the proper noun *le'ah* (*ha*!@*) (lay-aw), which means, “cow” and she was one of two primary wives of Jacob, the other was Rachel whose father was Laban.

“Paddan Aram” (*/D^P^m! sR*a&*) is another name for “Aram Naharaim,” which means, “Aram

of the Two Rivers” and is synonymous with the name “Mesopotamia” and refers to the city of Nahor, which was founded by Abraham’s brother and named after him and was the place in which Laban resided.

The name “Dinah” (hn*yD!) (dee-naw) means, “judgment” since the name is the feminine form of the word *din* (/yD!) (deen) meaning “judgment.”

Genesis 34 records that Dinah was raped by Shechem who was the son of Hamor the Hivite the prince of the land (See Genesis 34:2) and her brothers retaliated by killing not only Shechem and his father but all the men of that city.

Notice that Genesis 46:15 records the number of Leah’s sons who were born in Paddan Aram and their sons for a total of thirty-three and does “not” state that these all migrated to Egypt since Er and Onan died in Canaan.

Also, the final number of thirty-three does not include any women and includes those who were born in Paddan Aram and their children.

The thirty-three individuals include Leah’s six sons, Reuben’s four sons, Simeon’s six sons, Levi’s three sons, Judah’s five sons (including Er and Onan), Judah’s two grandsons, Issachar’s four sons and Zebulun’s three sons.

Genesis 46:16

“**The sons of Gad: Ziphion** (*tsiphyon* [/w{yp+x!}] [tsif-yone]

“lookout”) **and Haggi** (*chaggi* [yG!j^] [khag-gee]

“festive”), **Shuni** (*shuni* [yn!Wv] [shoo-nee]

“fortunate”) **and Ezbon** (*estbon* [/B)x+a#] [ets-bone]

“hastening to discern: I will be enlargement”), **Eri** (*eri* [yr!u@] [ay-ree]

“watchful”) **and Arodi** (*arodhi* [yd!w{a&}] [ar-odee]

“I shall subdue”) **and Areli** (*ar’eli* [yl!a@r+a^] [ay-ray-lee]

“lion of God”).”

“Gad” (dG*) (gawd) was the first boy that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis

30:9-11 and his name comes from “What good fortune” indicating that Leah attributed this child to fortune or good luck rather than God and his birth.

“Ziphion” appears in Numbers 26:15 as “Zephon” and “Ezbon” appears in Numbers 26:15 as “Ozni” and “Arodi” appears in Numbers 26:17 as “Arod.”

Genesis 46:17

“**The sons of Asher: Imnah** (*yimnah* [hn*m+y!] [yim-naw]

“right hand”) **and Ishvah** (*yishwah* [hw*v+y!] [yish-vaw]

“he will resemble”) **and Ishvi** (*yishwi* [yw!v+y!] [yish-vee]

“he resembles me”) **and Beriah** (*b^eri`ah* [hu*yr!B+] [ber-ee-aw]

“shouting”) **and their sister Serah** (*serach* [jr^C#] [seh-rakh]

“the prince breathed”). **And the sons of Beriah: Heber** (*chever* [rv#j#] [kheh- ver]

“companion”) **and Malchiel** (*malki’el* [la@yK!+m^] [mal-kee-ale]

“my king is God”).”

“Asher” (rv^a*) (aw-share) is the second son that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis 30:12-13 and his name means “women will call me happy” meaning that Leah thought she would be envied by other women because of this child.

“Serah” appears in Numbers 26:46 and 1 Chronicles 7:30 and it is unknown as to why her name is included in this list, which is unusual since women were only included in these lists if they played a significant role in Israel’s history.

“Heber” and “Malchiel” are two of Jacob’s four great grandchildren that appear in the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27.

Genesis 46:18

“**These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Leah; and she bore to Jacob these sixteen persons.**”

“Zilpah” is the proper noun *zilpah* (hP*!lzl) (zil-paw), which means, “intimacy” and like Bilhah she was Jacob’s concubine.

The name “Laban” (/b*!*) (Hebrew: *lavan*) means, “white” and the accounts of him appear in Genesis 24 and 29-31 and whose grandfather was Nahor, Abraham’s brother, and of course his sister was Rebekah and his daughter was Rachel, the wife of Jacob.

The sixteen people would include Zilpah’s two sons, Gad’s seven sons, Asher’s four sons and Asher’s two grandsons and Asher’s daughter.

Genesis 46:19

“The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel: Joseph and Benjamin.”

“Rachel” (*rachel*) (lj@r*) (raw-khale) means, “ewe,” the female of the sheep, especially of the mature and she was Jacob’s favorite wife.

“Joseph” ([s@w)y) (yoseph) was the first child that Rachel bore to Jacob and his name literally means, “He adds,” which is a play on the verb *yasaph* ([s^y*), “to add” and is also a prayer for another child, foreshadowing the birth of Benjamin and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:22-24.

“Benjamin” (/YM!Y*N+b!) (bin-yaw-mene) was the last child that Rachel bore to Jacob and his name means, “son of my right hand” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 35:16-18.

Genesis 46:20

“Now to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On, bore to him.”

Joseph’s firstborn was “Manasseh” (*m^enashsheh*) (hv#n^m+) (men-ash-sheh) whose name means, “He who causes to forget” as indicated by Joseph’s statement “For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father’s household.”

The second son that Asenath bore to Joseph was named “Ephraim” (*ephrayim*) (<y!r^p+a#) (ef-rah-yim) whose name means, “He has made me fruitful,” as indicated by Joseph’s statement “For

God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

The name “Asenath” (*asnath*) (tn^s+a*) (aw-senath) means, “the servant of the goddess Neith” and her father’s name was “Potiphera,” which is the proper noun *poti phera* (ur^p# yf!w)P) (pottee-feh-rah), and means, “he whom Ra (the sun-god) has given.”

“On” was situated seven miles northwest of modern Cairo and was a famous place for the worship of the sun-god Ra, thus it was called by the Greeks, “Heliopolis,” meaning, “sun-city.”

Genesis 46:21

“The sons of Benjamin: Bela (bela` [ul^B#] [beh-law]

“destruction”) **and Becher** (*bekher* [rk#B#] [becher]

“young camel”) **and Ashbel** (*ashbel* [lB@va^] [ash-bale]

“man of Baal”), **Gera** (*gera* [ar*G@] [gay-raw]

“a grain”) **and Naaman** (*na`aman* [/m*u&n^] [nah-am-awn]

“pleasantness”), **Ehi** (*echi* [yj!a@] [ay-khee]

“my brother”) **and Rosh** (*ro`sh* [var]) [roshe]

“head”), **Muppim** (*muppim* [<yP!m%] [moop-peem]

“serpent”) **and Huppim** (*chuppim* [<Pl!j%\] [khoop-peem]

“protected”) **and Ard** (*ard^e* [D+r+a^] [ard]

“I shall subdue”).”

“Becher” does not appear in the list of Benjamin’s sons in Numbers 26:38 or 1 Chronicles 8:1 since he probably died childless or did not have enough children to form an independent family.

“Gera,” “Naaman,” “Ehi,” “Rosh,” “Muppim,” and “Ard” do not appear in the list of Benjamin’s sons in Numbers 26 or 1 Chronicles 8:1-5 since they too died childless or didn’t have enough children to form an independent family.

“Huppim” appears in Numbers 26:39 as “Hupham.”

Genesis 46:22

“These are the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob; there were fourteen persons in all.”

The fourteen individuals would include Rachel's two sons and Benjamin's ten sons and Joseph two sons.

Genesis 46:23

“The sons of Dan: Hushim (*chushim* [*<yv!Wj*] [*khoo-sheem*]

“who makes haste”).”

“Dan” (/D*) (dawn) was the first child that Bilhah bore Jacob and his name means, “God has vindicated me” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:5-6.

“Hushim” appears in Numbers 26:42 as “Shuham.”

Genesis 46:24

“The sons of Naphtali: Jahzeel (*yachts^e’el* [*la@x+j+y^*] [*yakh-tseh-ale*]

“God divides”) **and Guni** (*guni* [*yn!WG*] [*goo-nee*]

“my protector”) **and Jezer** (*yets^er* [*rx#y*] [*yay-tser*]

“forming”) **and Shillem** (*shillem* [*<L@v!*] [*shil-ame*]

“repaid”).”

“Naphtali” (y!T**p+n^*) (naf-taw-lee) was the second child that Bilhah bore to Jacob and his name means, “my wrestling” reflecting Rachel's attitude in which she viewed her relationship with her sister Leah to be like a wrestling match and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:7-8.

“Jahzeel” appears in 1 Chronicles 7:13 as “Jahziel” “Shillem” appears in 1 Chronicles 7:13 as “Shallum.”

Genesis 46:25

“These are the sons of Bilhah, whom Laban gave to his daughter Rachel, and she bore these to Jacob; there were seven persons in all.”

“Bilhah” (*bilhah*) (hh*!B!) whose name means, “carefree” was a concubine given to Jacob by Rachel.

The seven individuals would include Bilhah's two sons, Dan's one son and Naphtali's four sons.

Genesis 46:26-27

“All the persons belonging to Jacob, who came to Egypt, his direct descendants, not including the wives of Jacob's sons, were sixty-six persons in all, and the sons of Joseph, who were born to him in Egypt were two; all the persons of the house of Jacob, who came to Egypt, were seventy.”

The number sixty-six would include Jacob's eleven sons, Reuben's four sons, Simeon's six sons, Levi's three sons, Judah's three sons, Judah's two grandsons, Issachar's four sons, Zebulun's three sons, Gad's seven sons, Asher's four sons, Asher's two grandsons, Benjamin's ten sons, Dan's one son, Naphtali's four sons, Asher's daughter and Jacob's daughter Dinah. The number seventy is arrived at by adding Jacob and his son Joseph and his two sons.

Genesis 46:28-30 presents to us the record of Joseph finally reuniting with his father. The genealogy contained in Genesis 46:8-27 is parenthetical and thus Genesis 46:28 resumes the record of Israel's migration from Canaan to Egypt. This move to Egypt would not only deliver Joseph's family from the famine but also from the corrupt Canaanite influence, which had already begun to trouble his family (See Genesis 34 and 38). The embryonic nation could develop into a great nation while in Egypt since the Egyptians unlike the Canaanites, would not seek to intermarry with Israel's family since they despised Hebrews because of their occupation as shepherds.

Moses refers to the development of Israel's family into a great nation while in Egypt.

Deuteronomy 26:5, “You shall answer and say before the LORD your God, ‘My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; but there he became a great, mighty and populous nation.’”

Genesis 46:28

“Now he sent Judah before him to Joseph, to point out the way before him to Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen.”

Jacob sends Judah to Joseph since Judah has gained his father’s confidence by delivering on his promise to bring Benjamin back to him from Egypt. The fact that Judah is chosen to inform Joseph that his father is arriving in Egypt indicates that Jacob considered Judah his heir apparent to lead the family when he has died.

Judah has demonstrated his leadership skill by taking personal responsibility for Benjamin and by his willingness to become a slave in Egypt in place of his brother Benjamin so as to not bring more sorrow upon his aged father. It is also fitting that Judah takes the lead in reuniting Joseph with his father since it was Judah who came up with the idea to sell Joseph into slavery in the first place. That Judah is instrumental in reuniting Joseph with his father is a manifestation of the providence of God meaning that it was no accident that Judah is given the lead in reuniting Joseph with his father since it was ordained by God from eternity past.

This reunion recalls Jacob's former meeting with Esau (32:3) and in both situations after a long period of separation Jacob sent a party ahead to meet the relative. The difference between the two reunions was that Jacob knew that his encounter with Joseph would be joyous whereas he did not know what would take place between himself and Esau.

“Sent” is the verb *shalach* (jl[^]v*) (shaw-lakh), which refers to “persons who are sent by other persons such as the action of sending messengers” and so this verb indicates that Jacob sent Judah as a messenger to Joseph.

“To point out the way” is the verb *yarah* (hr*y*) (yaw-raw), which is in the hiphil (causative) stem indicating that Jacob sent Judah ahead to Joseph to inform Joseph (hiphil: cause Joseph to be informed) of his impending arrival in Egypt before arriving in Goshen.

“Goshen” is the proper noun *Goshen* (/v#G) (go-shen), which was located in the eastern part of the Nile Delta, northeast of the Egyptian capital, Memphis and approximately 900 hundred square miles, well suited for grazing and for certain types

of agriculture and sparsely occupied allowing room for Hebrew expansion.

This area was also called the “land of Rameses” in Genesis 47:11 and according to the Exodus narrative, which records that the Israelites left Goshen under Moses and went from Rameses through the Wadi Tumilat (a valley connecting the Nile and the Bitter Lakes region, now a part of the Suez Canal system) to Succoth (Compare Exodus 8:18; 12:37; 13:17f).

Genesis 46:29

“Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time.”

“Prepared” is the verb *asar* (rs[^]a*) (aw-sar), which means, “to hitch” a horse to a chariot.

“Chariot” is the noun *merkavah* (hb*K*r+m#) (mer-kaw-vaw), which denotes a two-wheeled chariot that was used for warfare, hunting and ceremonial purposes.

In our passage, we see Joseph’s chariot used in a ceremonial context since he is welcoming his father to Egypt. According to Egyptian artwork, the principle distinction between ceremonial chariots and those used in warfare was that in the former the party drove himself whereas in war, the chariot usually contained a second person to drive it. Therefore, Joseph would be riding in his chariot alone.

Joseph’s action in hitching up his chariot and setting out to meet his father indicates that he was anxious to see his father and could not wait any longer. Despite his position as the prime minister of Egypt, Joseph does not wait for his father to come to him.

The fact that this menial task is mentioned in the passage indicates the importance of this journey and its significance.

The statement “Joseph...went up to Goshen” expresses a geographical movement from the Nile Valley to the Goshen plateau.

“Appeared” is the verb *ra’ah* (ha*r*) (ha-rah), which is in the causative-reflexive niphal form meaning that Joseph “caused himself to appear” before his

father. This form of the verb with a personal subject is always used in Genesis of a theophany (See Genesis 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 22:14; 26:3, 24; 35:6, 9; 48:3). Its use here indicates that when Joseph appeared before Jacob, to Jacob it was like the Lord appearing to him.

The fact that Joseph appeared before Jacob was in fact a manifestation of the providence of God or in other words, it was having the hand of the Lord manifested in his life.

Joseph falls on his father's neck and wept on his neck a long time and understandably so since the last time they saw each other was when Joseph was seventeen, thus they hadn't seen each in twenty years.

This indicated by the following. Genesis 37:2 records Joseph as 17 years old when he was sold into slavery and Genesis 41:46 records Joseph as 30 years old when he became prime minister of Egypt. Also, at the end of the seven years of prosperity in Egypt, Joseph must have been 37 years of age since he became prime minister at 30 years of age when he interpreted Pharaoh's dream.

In Genesis 45:6, after reuniting with his brothers, Joseph mentions to his brothers that two years of famine had already transpired and that five more remained. Right after this conversation that Joseph had with his brothers, Jacob moved to Egypt and reunited with Joseph according to Genesis 46. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was 37 after the seven years of prosperity and that he met his father after two years of famine indicates that Joseph was 39 years of age (or 40 if we count his 17th year) when he was reunited with his father Jacob and his brothers during the seven years of famine.

So if Joseph was 39 years of age when he was reunited with his father Jacob and became prime minister at 30 and was sold into slavery at 17, then Joseph was in Egypt for 22 years, (23 if 40 years of age) when he was reunited with his father Jacob.

"Wept" is the verb *bakhah* (hk*B*) (baw-kaw), which refers to audible weeping.

Joseph's emotional response expressed his relief that his father was indeed still alive.

This is the fifth time that we have seen Joseph weep in Genesis 42-46 (See Genesis 42:24; 43:30; 45:1-2; 46:29).

Joseph's weeping was not only an expression of his love and affection for his father but also an expression of gratitude towards the Lord for reuniting him with his father.

Psalm 86:12, "I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and will glorify Your name forever."

Psalm 106:1, "Praise the LORD! Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting."

Notice that the Scripture does not record that Joseph said anything to his father but simply cried for a long time since no words could express how Joseph felt at this point. Even though Joseph was the most powerful man on planet earth at this time, second only to Pharaoh, here he was once again a little boy in his father's arms. Israel was once again holding the son he had given up for dead.

Genesis 46:30

"Then Israel said to Joseph, 'Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive.'"

The name "Israel" is the proper noun *yisra'el* (la@r*c+y!) (yis-raw-ale), which means, "one who fights and overcomes with the power of God" since the Lord states the reason for the name is that Jacob has fought with both God and men and has prevailed (See Genesis 32:24-32).

The name "Israel" memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

The name "Israel" reflects strength and character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer. Thus, the use of this name signifies that Jacob is not walking in his flesh at this point in the narrative but is walking by faith.

Jacob's statement "Now let me die, since I have seen your (Joseph's) face that you are still alive" indicates that in Israel's opinion this experience of

being reuniting with Joseph could never be surpassed on earth.

Anything else that would happen after this would pale in the light of this embrace since Israel feels that in receiving his son back from the dead he has reached the fulfillment of his life and it is this taste of resurrection from the dead that makes him long for death.

We will complete our study of Genesis 46 by noting verses 31 thru 34, where we will see Joseph preparing his brothers to meet Pharaoh.

Genesis 46:31-32

“Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, ‘I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and will say to him, ‘My brothers and my father's household, who were in the land of Canaan, have come to me and the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock; and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.’”

If you recall, in Genesis 45:10, we saw that Joseph sent an invitation to his father through his brothers to settle in the land of Goshen.

Genesis 45:10, “You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.”

Then, we saw in Genesis 45:16-20, Pharaoh extended an invitation to Israel and his family to settle in Egypt.

Genesis 45:17-18, “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.’”

Notice that unlike Joseph, Pharaoh does not specify the pasturelands of Goshen, which indicates that Pharaoh is unaware that Joseph's family are shepherds in need specifically of pastureland and so we see that Joseph needs to obtain authorization from Pharaoh to settle his father and his family in Goshen. Therefore, in

Genesis 46:31-34, we see Joseph wisely preparing his brothers for an audience with Pharaoh and rehearses the speeches and answers to be given on that occasion in order to receive the desired result of living in Goshen. So Joseph informs his brothers in advance that he intends to request the land of Goshen for them.

Now, we must understand that Joseph is dealing with a very delicate situation here in that the Egyptians considered shepherds an abomination and Joseph's family were just that. Therefore, Joseph did not want to offend his family by making them feel that he had adopted the Egyptian attitude in order to please the Egyptians and was treating them as socially inferior.

He needed to be perfectly honest in the matter and secure for his family a position of comparative isolation geographically, which would segregate them from the Egyptians who held their occupation with such contempt. On the other hand, this situation was also difficult for Pharaoh since he was the king of Egypt who was bound by Egyptian customs and prejudices. However, he did not want to offend Joseph and his family either and so Pharaoh needed to have a solution, which would not offend his countrymen or Joseph's family.

Therefore, Joseph's proposal to Pharaoh to settle his family in Goshen would solve the problem since it would segregate Joseph's family from the bulk of the Egyptian population, isolating them from the majority of the population.

The expression “to his brothers and to his father's household,” seems redundant since Joseph's brothers were a part of their father's household, but such expressions are common in Hebrew and should be understood as “to his brothers and in particular to his father's household.”

“His brothers” refers to Joseph's eleven brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali.

“His father's household” would include the wives and children and grandchildren of Israel/Jacob's sons, not to mention the women and children of Shechem who were absorbed into Jacob's family according to Genesis 34:29 as well servants.

Therefore, there could have been as many as 300 people belonging to Israel/Jacob's household. Remember, the purpose of the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27 was not to record the name of every person who migrated from Canaan to Egypt but to name those who will become tribe and family heads.

"I will go up" is the verb *`alah* (hl*u*), which does "not" denote the idea of vertical movement, although, this can be the verb's meaning, but in the context of Genesis 46:31 denotes the idea of Joseph "approaching" Pharaoh for the purpose of receiving authorization to settle his family in the land of Goshen.

"I...will tell (Pharaoh)" is the verb *naghadh* (dg^n*) (naw-gad), which in the hiphil (causative) stem means Joseph "caused" Pharaoh to be informed of the arrival of his family in Egypt from Canaan.

"Shepherds" is composed of: (1) Masculine plural qal participle form of the verb *ra`ah* (hu*r*) (raw-aw), which means, "shepherd" (2) Feminine singular noun *tso`n* (/ax) (tsone), which means, "sheep."

The verb *ra`ah*, "shepherd" is used as a transitive verb meaning that the noun *tso`n*, "flocks" functions as its direct object in order to describe the activities of Joseph's family members who care for sheep. Therefore, the word "shepherds" in the Hebrew text literally reads, "shepherd sheep" emphasizing the "activities" related to the occupation of a shepherd.

"For" is the conjunction *ki* (yK!) (kee), which functions to introduce a causal clause, which explains why Joseph's brothers shepherd sheep, namely, because they have always been men of livestock.

"They are" is the 3rd person common plural qal perfect form of the verb *hayah* (hy*h*), which means, "they have always been" and denotes the state of Joseph's brothers of always being shepherds since it has been passed down from generation to generation. This word implies that Joseph's brothers were not looking to change their occupations but simply their residences.

"Keepers" is the masculine plural noun *`enosh* (vw{n@a\$) (en-oshe), which means, "men."

"Flock" is the masculine singular noun *miqneh* (hn#q+m!) (mik-neh), which means, "livestock" referring to sheep and goats. The term *miqneh*, "flock" emphasizes both sheep and goats whereas the noun *tso`n* emphasizes only sheep.

Therefore, the statement "the men are shepherds, for they have been keepers of livestock" in the Hebrew text literally reads, "The men shepherd sheep because they have always been men of livestock."

The phrase "the men shepherd sheep" emphasizes the "function" or "activities" related to the occupation of being a shepherd whereas the phrase "they have always been men of livestock" emphasizes the occupation itself.

"Herds" is the noun *baqar* (rQ*b*) (baw-kawr), which refers to not only the cattle and oxen that God blessed Israel/Jacob with while in Paddan Aram with Laban (See Genesis 30-31) but it also refers to the offspring of these animals, which were born in Canaan.

The phrase "all that they have" refers to the material possessions of Joseph's family.

There is a very definite progression of thought conveyed by Joseph to his brothers: (1) Joseph's brothers "are" shepherds; (2) They have always "been" shepherds; (3) They have brought their flocks to Egypt.

This progression of thought is designed to lead Pharaoh to the conclusion that Joseph's family must settle in Goshen.

Genesis 46:33-34

"When Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' you shall say, 'Your servants have been keepers of livestock from our youth even until now, both we and our fathers,' that you may live in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is loathsome to the Egyptians."

"Loathsome" is the noun *to`evah* (hb*u@w{T) (to-ay-vaw), which means, "abomination," which refers to anything greatly disliked or abhorred, a vile, detestable action, condition or habit. This noun indicates that the Egyptians greatly disliked

and abhorred the occupation of being a shepherd and considered it as detestable.

The reason why the Egyptians held shepherds in such contempt is that the Egyptians who were mainly urban city dwellers distrusted and feared nomadic peoples much like the modern attitude towards gypsies. The Egyptian monuments portray shepherds as distorted, dirty, emaciated figures.

Even though shepherds were detestable to the Egyptians, Joseph instructs his brothers that they are to be honest with Pharaoh and tell him that they have been shepherds from their youth as were their ancestors so that he will give them the land of Goshen. This in turn would segregate their family from the rest of the Egyptian population and would meet their needs as shepherds. The racial bigotry of the Egyptians towards Hebrew shepherds would serve to maintain the Israelites as a separate people.

Even though the Israelite's exile in Egypt was in many respects a bitter experience for them, it was a gracious act on the part of God since it protected them from the corrupt Canaanite influence. Therefore, the divine rationale for the Lord permitting Joseph to be sold into slavery in Egypt was to relocate his family so as to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

Unlike the Canaanites, the Egyptians would be unwilling to integrate with the Israelites and absorb them into their culture since they considered their worship of God repulsive as well as the profession of shepherding. The segregated culture of the Egyptians guaranteed that the embryonic nation of Israel could develop into a great nation within the Egyptian borders.

It is interesting that the shepherds in Israel were the first to receive the news of the Savior being born in the town of Bethlehem (Luke 2:8-20) and they too were a despised, ostracized group of people who first received the good news of the Messiah being born. The Pharisees hated the shepherds but our Lord identified with them, calling Himself the "Good Shepherd" (John 10:11, 14) and in fact He is described in Hebrews 13:20 as the "Great Shepherd" of the sheep and Peter describes our Lord as "the Shepherd" (1 Pet. 2:25).

Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians just as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is an abomination to the world since He is rejected today.

Genesis 47

Genesis 47 is divided into five sections: (1) Joseph's brothers meet Pharaoh (47:1-6). (2) Jacob meets Pharaoh (47:7-10). (3) Joseph settles family in Goshen (47:11-12). (4) Joseph enslaves the Egyptians to Pharaoh (47:13-26). (5) Joseph swears to bury Jacob in Canaan (47:27-31).

Genesis 47:1

"Then Joseph went in and told Pharaoh, and said, 'My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they have, have come out of the land of Canaan; and behold, they are in the land of Goshen.'"

"My father" refers of course to Israel/Jacob and "my brothers" refers to Joseph's eleven brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali.

As we noted in Genesis 46:31-34, not only did Joseph's father and brothers migrate to Egypt but also their wives and children and grandchildren of Israel/Jacob's sons, not to mention the women and children of Shechem who were absorbed into Jacob's family according to Genesis 34:29 as well servants. Therefore, there could have been as many as 300 people belonging to Israel/Jacob's household.

Remember, the purpose of the genealogy of Genesis 46:8-27 was not to record the name of every person who migrated from Canaan to Egypt but to name those who will become tribe and family heads.

"Flocks" is the feminine singular noun *tso'n* (/ax) (tsone), which refers to sheep and goats.

"Herds" is the noun *baqar* (רֶקֶב*) (baw-kawr), which refers to not only the cattle and oxen that God blessed Israel/Jacob with while in Paddan Aram with Laban (See Genesis 30-31) but it also refers to the offspring of these animals, which were born in Canaan.

The phrase "all that they have" refers to the material possessions of Joseph's family.

“Canaan” is the more ancient name of Palestine, apparently derived from Hurrian, meaning, “belonging to the land of red purple,” the dye the early Canaanites or Phoenician traders peddled far and wide. The natural boundaries of Canaan as expressed in the Bible extend from the Negev in the South to the northern reaches of the Lebanon Range in Syria and the land west of the range and of the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea.

As we noted in Genesis 45:10, Joseph sent an invitation to his father through his brothers to settle in the land of Goshen.

Genesis 45:10, “You shall live in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children’s children and your flocks and your herds and all that you have.”

Then, we saw in Genesis 45:16-20, Pharaoh extended an invitation to Israel and his family to settle in Egypt.

Genesis 45:17-18, “Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: load your beasts and go to the land of Canaan, and take your father and your households and come to me, and I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land.’”

Notice that unlike Joseph, Pharaoh does not specify the pasturelands of Goshen, which indicates that Pharaoh is unaware that Joseph’s family are shepherds in need specifically of pastureland and so we see that Joseph needs to obtain authorization from Pharaoh to settle his father and his family in Goshen. Therefore, Joseph needed to be very diplomatic with Pharaoh and so we saw in Genesis 46:31-34, that Joseph wisely prepared his brothers for an audience with Pharaoh and coached them as to what to say to him on that occasion in order to receive the desired result of living in Goshen. So Joseph informs his brothers in advance that he intends to request the land of Goshen for them and then in Genesis 47:1, we see him doing just as promised.

“Goshen” is the proper noun *Goshen* (/v#G) (go-shen), which was located in the eastern part of the Nile Delta, northeast of the Egyptian capital, Memphis and approximately 900 hundred square

miles, well suited for grazing and for certain types of agriculture and sparsely occupied allowing room for Hebrew expansion.

This area was also called the “land of Rameses” in Genesis 47:11 and according to the Exodus narrative, which records that the Israelites left Goshen under Moses and went from Rameses through the Wadi Tumilat (a valley connecting the Nile and the Bitter Lakes region, now a part of the Suez Canal system) to Succoth (Compare Exodus 8:18; 12:37; 13:17f).

This situation is very delicate since the Egyptians considered shepherds an abomination and Joseph’s family were just that. Therefore, Joseph did not want to offend his family by making them feel that he had adopted the Egyptian attitude in order to please the Egyptians and was treating them as socially inferior.

He needed to be perfectly honest in the matter and secure for his family a position of comparative isolation geographically, which would segregate them from the Egyptians who held their occupation with such contempt. On the other hand, this situation was also difficult for Pharaoh since he was the king of Egypt who was bound by Egyptian customs and prejudices. However, he did not want to offend Joseph and his family either and so Pharaoh needed to have a solution, which would not offend his countrymen or Joseph’s family. Therefore, Joseph’s proposal to Pharaoh to settle his family in Goshen would solve the problem since it would segregate Joseph’s family from the bulk of the Egyptian population, isolating them from the majority of the population.

H. C. Leupold gives the following excellent comment, he writes, “Joseph knew the exact situation in reference to all things Egyptian and had coached his brethren how to meet this particular occasion. Yet much would depend on his own approach to Pharaoh. Pharaoh’s attitude had been very generous (45:17ff). But royalty has been known to speak generously and afterward to forget what it had promised. Besides, though Joseph was overlord over the whole land, he would have laid himself open to criticism had he provided for his own family in so liberal a manner as Pharaoh had suggested. It was the part of wisdom to have Pharaoh confirm publicly what he

had originally suggested, and so to let it appear that the settlement of Israel was Pharaoh's work." (Exposition of Genesis, volume 2, page 1124; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan).

Even though shepherds were detestable to the Egyptians, we saw in Genesis 46:31-34 Joseph instructed his brothers that they are to be honest with Pharaoh and tell him that they have been shepherds from their youth as were their ancestors so that he will give them the land of Goshen. This in turn would segregate their family from the rest of the Egyptian population and would meet their needs as shepherds.

The racial bigotry of the Egyptians towards Hebrew shepherds would serve to maintain the Israelites as a separate people. Even though the Israelites exile in Egypt was in many respects a bitter experience for them, it was a gracious act on the part of God since it protected them from the corrupt Canaanite influence. Therefore, the divine rationale for the Lord permitting Joseph to be sold into slavery in Egypt was to relocate his family so as to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

Unlike the Canaanites, the Egyptians would be unwilling to integrate with the Israelites and absorb them into their culture since they considered their worship of God repulsive as well as the profession of shepherding. The segregated culture of the Egyptians guaranteed that the embryonic nation of Israel could develop into a great nation within the Egyptian borders.

Therefore, the phrase "with their flocks and herds" emphasizes that Joseph's family are shepherds, which in turn would assure Pharaoh that they did not have any social or political ambitions and would also preserve his family from the Egyptian way of life and intermarriage with the Egyptians.

Also, Joseph's statement to Pharaoh, "behold, they are in the land of Goshen" is designed to plant in Pharaoh's mind the idea of settling his family in Goshen.

Genesis 47:2

"He took five men from among his brothers and presented them to Pharaoh."

Although, the Scriptures do not record the names of the five brothers that Joseph selected to meet Pharaoh we can infer from Joseph's wise and discerning actions in the past that he selected five brothers who would be most presentable at the Egyptian court to present their request to settle in the land of Goshen.

Genesis 47:3

"Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, 'What is your occupation?' So they said to Pharaoh, 'Your servants are shepherds, both we and our fathers.'"

"Pharaoh" is the proper noun *par`oh* (hu)r+P^ (par-o), which means, "great house" and meant something like "his honor, his majesty" and was synonymous with the title "the king of Egypt."

Sesostris III (1878-1853 B.C) would have been the Pharaoh that invited Jacob and his family to settle in the land of Goshen according to the chronology accepted by the *Cambridge Ancient History* and cited by Eugene H. Merrill (Kingdom of Priests, page 50, Baker Book House).

Pharaoh asks Joseph's brothers their occupation since Joseph informed Pharaoh before he met his brothers that they were shepherds (See Genesis 46:31-34) while on the other hand, Joseph's brothers follow his instructions, telling Pharaoh that they are shepherds even though shepherds were despised by the Egyptians.

"Shepherds" is composed of: (1) Masculine singular qal participle form of the verb *ra`ah* (hu*r*) (raw-aw), which means, "shepherd" (2) Feminine singular noun *tso'n* (/ax)) (tsone), which refers to sheep and goats.

The verb *ra`ah*, "shepherd" is used as a transitive verb meaning that the noun *tso'n*, "sheep" functions as its direct object in order to describe the activities of Joseph's family members who care for sheep. Therefore, the word "shepherds" in the Hebrew text literally reads, "shepherd sheep" emphasizing the "activities" related to the occupation of a shepherd.

The phrase "our fathers" refers to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Genesis 47:4

“They said to Pharaoh, ‘We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan. Now, therefore, please let your servants live in the land of Goshen.’”

The word “sojourner” is the Hebrew verb *gur* (rWG) (goor), which refers to a specific legal status of a person who lives as a resident alien and is in a dependent legal status and is not a native.

The verb *gur*, “sojourner” signifies Jacob and his family’s status as “resident aliens” meaning that although they would live in Egypt they would possess neither land nor clan ties with the Egyptians and would be without legal support and protection and would be vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by the Egyptians.

Such a people, like Jacob and his family, would have been dependent upon a native to recognize and protect him while they were in Egypt, which of course, Joseph did while he was alive.

Furthermore, in Genesis 46:3-4, although after Joseph’s death the Egyptians exploited the Israelites, God gave Israel assurance that He would bless his descendants while they resided in Egypt and would make them a great nation there.

Therefore, the use of the verb *gur* in this statement “We have come to sojourn in the land, for there is no pasture for your servants' flocks, for the famine is severe in the land of Canaan” would clearly suggest to Pharaoh that Joseph’s family was requesting to live temporarily in his country as immigrants in order to find relief from the famine in Canaan.

The use of this verb *gur*, “sojourner” would also connect the Israelites migration to Egypt with the divine prophecy to Abraham recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Genesis 15:13, “God said to Abram, ‘Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.’”

When Israel left Egypt under Moses, the Lord reminded the citizens of Israel that they were strangers and oppressed in Egypt and were therefore obligated to treat foreigners well when they lived in the land of Canaan.

Exodus 22:21, “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Exodus 23:9, “You shall not oppress a stranger, since you yourselves know the feelings of a stranger, for you also were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19:34, “The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.”

Deuteronomy 10:19, “So show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

The explanatory clause “the famine is severe in the land of Canaan,” was proper for Joseph’s brothers to communicate to Pharaoh even though Joseph did not tell them to say this to Pharaoh. Therefore, they were saying in effect to Pharaoh that they had left their native land as a matter of necessity and survival.

Joseph’s brothers’ request of Pharaoh “please let your servants live in the land of Goshen” was not wrong on their part or in disobedience to Joseph’s instructions but was according to Joseph’s plan and in agreement with what he told Pharaoh. This is confirmed in that Joseph informed his brothers that before they speak to Pharaoh he would let him know that they were already in Goshen as indicated by the statement in Genesis 47:1, “behold they are in the land of Goshen,” which was designed to plant in Pharaoh’s mind the idea of settling his family in Goshen.

Furthermore, the brothers’ request was also in line with Pharaoh’s offer in Genesis 45:18 “I will give you the best of the land of Egypt” which Goshen would be for Joseph’s family.

Genesis 47:5

“Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘Your father and your brothers have come to you.’”

Pharaoh’s statement “your father and your brothers have come to you” is official acknowledgement and legitimization of their presence” (Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, pages 586, Zondervan). In this statement, Pharaoh is in effect

saying “so I see your father and your brothers have arrived.”

Pharaoh’s acknowledgement of the arrival of Joseph’s father and brothers reminds him of what he promised Joseph before their arrival, namely, “I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you will eat the fat of the land” (Genesis 45:18).

Genesis 47:6

“The land of Egypt is at your disposal; settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock.”

Pharaoh agrees with Joseph’s suggestion to settle his family in the land of Goshen since it would not offend Joseph and his family or his Egyptian countrymen who disliked shepherds. After Joseph’s brothers have their audience with Pharaoh, Pharaoh turns to Joseph and speaks to him granting his request as a special favor to Joseph for his delivering the nation of Egypt from famine.

By addressing himself to Joseph, Pharaoh implicitly authorizes him to be responsible for implementing his royal decree, which he did according to Genesis 47:11. The manner in which this authorization is given expresses Pharaoh’s absolute authority, even over Joseph. However, in Genesis 47:7-10, Israel blesses Pharaoh expressing his spiritual superiority over Pharaoh since God elected Jacob to inherit the promises, privileges, blessings, and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

Pharaoh’s offer “if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock” would further express his good will towards Joseph’s family. This offer was not without precedence since Egyptian inscriptions frequently mention that foreigners were put in charge Pharaoh’s cattle. It would provide Joseph’s family an opportunity to advance themselves in Pharaoh’s administration and enjoy privileges and protection not often extended to resident aliens as themselves.

Genesis 47:7-10 presents to us the record of Jacob meeting Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:7

“Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh.”

“Bless” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*), which means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, the verb *barakh* indicates Jacob’s desire for Pharaoh that he would be endued with power by the Lord for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.

This desire to bless Pharaoh in the sense of enduing him with power for success, prosperity, fecundity and longevity was according to the will of God since Pharaoh blessed Joseph and his family who were descendants of Abraham.

In Genesis 47:7, the verb *barakh* does “not” refer to a “greeting” since if it was we would expect Joseph’s brothers to do the same, which they do not.

The fact that Pharaoh blessed Joseph and his family was another manifestation of the fulfillment of the promise contained in the covenant that the Lord gave to Abraham that He would “bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse.” This promise is contained in the “Abrahamic” covenant and was originally established with Abraham when he left Haran and is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3.

Genesis 12:2, 3

“And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing.”

“And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The “Abrahamic” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness but we need to clarify an important aspect of an unconditional covenant. An unconditional covenant which binds the one making the covenant to a certain course of action may have “blessings” attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient, which is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on

His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God.

The blessings that Abraham received in Genesis 12:1-3 were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord's command to leave his country and his father's house and go to the land, which the Lord would show him, namely, the land of Canaan.

The Abrahamic covenant contained three categories of promises: (1) Personal (2) National (3) Universal and Spiritual.

(1) Personal: "I will bless you and make your name great" (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the fact that the Lord would make Abraham a famous character with a great reputation among men and before God. This fame and reputation is expressed in that Abraham is called a "father of a multitude" in Genesis 17:5, a prince of God in Genesis 23:6, the man in God's confidence in Genesis 18:17-19, a prophet in Genesis 20:7, the servant of God in Psalm 105:6 and the friend of God in 2 Chronicles 20:7 and James 2:23.

(2) National: "I will make you into a great nation" (Gen. 12:2), which refers to the nation of Israel.

(3) Spiritual and Universal: "And all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" refers to the fact that through Jesus Christ, Abraham would be a blessing to all mankind since it is only through Jesus Christ that one becomes Abraham's seed and heirs of the promise (Gal. 3:29; Eph. 2:13, 19).

The phrase "and you shall be a blessing" is "not" a promise since the verb *hayah*, "you shall be" is in the "imperative" mood expressing a command and literally means, "so become a blessing" indicating that Abraham had a responsibility to walk by faith, which is expressed by obedience to the Lord's commands.

The promises "I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse" refers to the fact that the Lord is identifying Himself with the cause of Abraham and guaranteeing protection for Abraham and his descendants. Therefore, blessing Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites would therefore, be equivalent to doing it to God whereas those who curse Abraham and his descendants, the Israelites would be cursing God.

The promises "I will bless them that bless you and the one who curses you I will curse" refers to the fact that the Lord would bless those who bless Abraham and his descendants and curse those who curse him and his descendants.

Pharaoh blessed Joseph who was a descendant of Abraham by promoting him to prime minister of Egypt and he blessed Joseph's family by settling them in the land of Goshen. Therefore, God the Holy Spirit through Jacob would bless Pharaoh by prospering him and this is reflected later on in Genesis 47 where Joseph obtains for Pharaoh almost all of Egypt's wealth, including the people themselves (47:13-26).

The fact that Jacob is recorded as to have blessed Pharaoh fulfills the spiritual principle taught in Hebrews 7:7 that "the lesser is blessed by the greater." Jacob was superior to Pharaoh in that he was the recipient of the promises, privileges, responsibilities and blessings of the Abrahamic covenant whereas Pharaoh was superior to Jacob in the temporal realm in that he was the king of the most powerful nation on the earth in that day, Egypt.

The promise that appears in Genesis 12:3 "in you all the families of the earth will be blessed" was fulfilled through Joseph's wise administration during the seven years of prosperity and famine, which delivered the nation of Egypt from destruction. It was also fulfilled in that God prospered Egypt economically in that all the nations of the earth had to go to Egypt to buy food. So we can see that Jacob is functioning as the instrument used by God to bring blessing to this Gentile, heathen king and his nation.

Genesis 47:7

"Then Joseph brought his father Jacob and presented him to Pharaoh; and Jacob blessed Pharaoh."

Genesis 47:8

"Pharaoh said to Jacob, 'How many years have you lived?'"

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on Pharaoh questioning Jacob with regards to his age, writes, "The question is perhaps prompted by a blessing of longevity from Jacob or possibly marks the

honor of Jacob's long life and many children. Egyptians were preoccupied with death, and the pharaohs, who professed to be eternal, sought to immortalize their bodies. Jacob at 130-and he will live another seventeen years (47:28)-already exceeds the ideal Egyptian life span of 110 years (see 50:22). His age must impress Pharaoh." (Genesis, page 587, Zondervan).

Genesis 47:9

"So Jacob said to Pharaoh, 'The years of my sojourning are one hundred and thirty; few and unpleasant have been the years of my life, nor have they attained the years that my fathers lived during the days of their sojourning.'"

"My sojourning" is a reference to Jacob's life long status as a resident alien in the land of Canaan. He lived in Beersheba with his father and mother until the age of forty and then had to flee to Paddan Aram because Esau was threatening to kill him and on the way to Paddan Aram, he stopped at Bethel where the Lord met him.

Upon returning from Paddan Aram, he stopped at Penuel where the Lord met him again and then he stayed temporarily at Succoth and Shechem before returning to Bethel to fulfill his vow to the Lord and finally, he returned to his father in Hebron. Therefore, we can see that Jacob was an excellent type of the spiritual truth that the believer's life on planet earth is a pilgrimage to the eternal home in heaven.

Hebrews 11:1-16

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen for by it the men of old gained approval."

"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."

"By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks."

"By faith Enoch was taken up so that he would not see death; AND HE WAS NOT FOUND

BECAUSE GOD TOOK HIM UP; for he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God."

"And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him."

"By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going."

"By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God."

"By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised."

"Therefore there was born even of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE."

"All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth."

"For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own."

"And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return."

"But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not

ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.”

The statement “few and unpleasant have been the years of my life” appears to be a poor testimony before Pharaoh who was an unbeliever but this is not the case since it is a true statement. This statement reflects that Jacob has spent many years of self-induced misery and divine discipline as a result of his poor decisions as well as many years of experiencing undeserved suffering.

For example, He experienced undeserved suffering as a child as a result of living in a home where his father Isaac favored his twin brother Esau while his mother favored him. Jacob experienced self-induced misery by getting Esau to exchange his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup, which resulted in Esau hating him.

There was more self-induced misery when Jacob attempted to gain the blessing of the birthright from his father by deception and then had to flee to his uncle Laban in Paddan Aram because Esau threatened to kill him. This was followed by a twenty year exile in Paddan Aram with his uncle Laban who cheated him out of his wages.

Jacob sought Rachel to be his wife and ended up with four, and the outcome of this was continual competition and problems in his home. He finally fled from his uncle and eventually had to make a non-aggression pact with him to prevent a war. Then, Jacob’s daughter Dinah was raped at Shechem, which would have never happened had he not procrastinated and went directly to Bethel to fulfill his vow to the Lord. This poor decision also resulted in his sons Simeon and Levi exacting revenge for the rape of their sister Dinah by killing all the men of Shechem, which in turn led to the cities surrounding Shechem seeking to destroy Jacob’s family, which would have taken place had the Lord not intervened and protected him.

Then, this was followed by Rachel, his favorite wife, dying while giving birth to Benjamin along the way to Bethlehem, which was of course undeserved suffering.

Next, his oldest son Reuben had sex with his concubine who was Rachel’s maid, which was a reaction to his father not loving his mother Leah as much as Rachel. Then, of course, his sons sold his

beloved son Joseph into slavery and deceived him into thinking that Joseph was dead, which again took place because the sons of Leah and the concubines resented Jacob favoring Joseph over them.

Finally, there was the famine which threatened the existence of his family, and the prime minister of Egypt appearing to want to take the lone surviving child of his favorite wife, namely Benjamin.

Therefore, Jacob’s statement to Pharaoh “few and unpleasant have been the years of my life” was a true statement and evaluation of his life and therefore not a poor testimony since he also knew that God had blessed him throughout all his adversities whether self-induced or undeserved.

Also, in Genesis 47:9, we read where Jacob says to Pharaoh that he has not lived as long as his fathers lived during the days of their sojourning, which is a reference of course to his father Isaac who lived to be a 180 years of age (See Genesis 35:28) and his grandfather Abraham who died at the age of 175 (See Genesis 25:7).

Unlike his sons, Jacob does not use deferential language and call himself Pharaoh’s servant since he views himself as the servant of God, which expresses his spiritual superiority over Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:10

“And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from his presence.”

Once again, the statement “Jacob blessed Pharaoh” expresses Jacob’s Spirit inspired desire that God would endue Pharaoh with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity since Pharaoh had blessed his family who were descendants of Abraham.

In Genesis 47:10, the verb *barakh* does “not” refer to a “farewell” since if it was we would expect Joseph’s brothers to have done the same, which they did not.

Up to this point when Jacob met Joseph, Jacob did not see the hand of God in his adversity as his son Joseph did. The more Jacob experienced adversity through his own bad decisions, the more fearful and protective he became while on the other hand, the more undeserved suffering that Joseph

experienced the more forgiving he became and eager to serve others, even at his own expense.

In his adversity Joseph grew closer to God, while Jacob drifted farther and farther away from his relationship with God.

In this interview with Pharaoh all of these bitter experiences may have begun to come into focus for Jacob in that he realized that he was wrong for concluding to his sons that “all these things are against me” (42:36) since his fears did not conform to the facts. Therefore, this audience with Pharaoh was a turning point in Jacob’s life in that just as his sons were brought through the providence of God to the place where they acknowledged their sins and obeyed God so Jacob seems to have done the same here.

At this point in his life, I believe Jacob recognized that most of his suffering and sorrow was the result of his own bad decisions, and has now begun to see God and the way that He deals with His people in an entirely different perspective.

The people that Jacob tried to withhold and protect, namely Rachel, Joseph, Benjamin were the very people that were taken from him. It was only by giving up Benjamin that he gained him and by giving up Benjamin he preserved not only Benjamin’s life, but that of his entire family.

Up to this point in Jacob’s life, we have seen that all the blessings that he and his family received were the result of God’s grace policy and were entirely unmerited because of his bad decisions. Grace is all that God is free to do in giving us eternal salvation and imparting unmerited blessings to us based upon the merits of Christ and His death on the Cross-and our eternal union with Him.

Grace is God treating us in a manner that we don’t deserve and excludes any human works in order to acquire eternal salvation or blessing from God. Grace means that God saved us and blessed us despite ourselves and not according to anything that we do and gives the Creator all the credit and the creature none.

Therefore, the unmerited blessings that Jacob received manifested that the fulfillment of the promises of the Abrahamic covenant were unconditional meaning that its fulfillment

depended upon the faithfulness of God exclusively. It is at this point in his life where Jacob was advanced in age and helpless and hopeless that he realized the true meaning of grace.

Bob Deffinbaugh gives an excellent comment regarding Jacob at this point in his life, he writes, “I find it noteworthy to observe that while the book of Genesis covers a period of thousands of years, almost half of the book is devoted to the life and times of Jacob. Abraham, the great man of faith, spans chapters 11-24; Isaac, chapters 21-35; Joseph, chapters 30-50; but Jacob outspans them all, from chapter 25 through chapter 50. Why is it that Joseph was such a great and godly man, and yet he had no tribe named after him? Why did he not have a son whose heir would be the priestly line? Why did Messiah not come forth from Joseph rather than Judah? I do not know, other than the fact that God chooses to accomplish His purposes through men like Jacob and Judah, and you and me. If Joseph is a type of Christ, then surely Jacob is a type of most Christians. One reason why so much time and space is allotted to Jacob (in my opinion) is that it took this long for him to grasp the matters of salvation and sanctification.” (The Book of Genesis, page 363; Biblical Studies, 1997).

Genesis 47:11-12 records Joseph settling his family in Goshen.

Genesis 47:11

“So Joseph settled his father and his brothers and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had ordered.”

A comparison of Pharaoh’s statement recorded in Genesis 47:6 with the statement in Genesis 47:11 indicates that “the land of Goshen” and “the land of Rameses” refer to the same location in Egypt.

The fact that Joseph’s family would reside in Goshen would later on protect their descendants, the Israelites from the plagues that God placed upon the nation of Egypt during the Exodus generation (See Exodus 8:22; 9:26).

As we have noted in the past, the racial bigotry of the Egyptians towards Hebrew shepherds would serve to maintain the Israelites as a separate

people. Even though the Israelites exile in Egypt was in many respects a bitter experience for them, it was a gracious act on the part of God since it protected them from the corrupt Canaanite influence. Therefore, the divine rationale for the Lord for moving Jacob and his family to Egypt was to protect them from the corrupting Canaanite influence.

Unlike the Canaanites, the Egyptians would be unwilling to integrate with the Israelites and absorb them into their culture since they considered their worship of God repulsive as well as the profession of shepherding. The segregated culture of the Egyptians guaranteed that the embryonic nation of Israel could develop into a great nation within the Egyptian borders.

“Settled” is the verb *yashav* (בִּישַׁב) (yaw-shav), which means, “to live in a place for a period of time” and does “not” mean to live in a place permanently.

In the hiphil (causative) stem, the verb indicates that Joseph “caused” his father and his brothers to live in the land of Rameses, which is Goshen for an unspecified period of time, which according to the prophecy given to Abraham in Genesis 15:12-16 was four hundred years. Although this would be a long term migration from the human perspective, from the divine perspective it would not be permanent.

“Possession” is the noun *achuzzah* (חֲצֻצָה) (akh-ooz-zaw), which refers to an inalienable possession received from one with the authority to give it (cf. 17:8; 23:4, 9, 20) (Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, page 587, Zondervan).

The prepositional phrase “in the best part of the land” describes Goshen as the best land for agriculture (Compare Isaiah 1:19) and this can be inferred by Israel’s later references to it (See Numbers 20:5; Psalm 78:47) (Bruce K. Waltke, Genesis, A Commentary, page 571, Zondervan).

The statement “as Pharaoh ordered” refers to Joseph executing Pharaoh’s command, which is recorded in Genesis 47:6, “settle your father and your brothers in the best of the land, let them live in the land of Goshen; and if you know any capable men among them, then put them in charge of my livestock.”

Genesis 47:12

“Joseph provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to their little ones.”

Genesis 47:12 is a “janus” verse, which is a term named after the Roman god of doorways with one head and two faces looking in opposite directions and is a term applied to a literary unit that looks back and forth to unite the units before and after. Therefore, Genesis 47:12 contrasts the abundant food provisions of the Israelites with the hunger of the Egyptians in Genesis 47:13, which highlights the miraculous provisions and protections that God bestowed on Joseph’s family.

The phrase “according to their little ones” means that each family’s allocation of food was in direct proportion to the number of children in the family.

Psalm 37:25, “I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread.”

Psalms 34:10, “The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in want of any good thing.”

Philippians 4:19, “Now, my God, the Father will as a dogmatic statement of fact, fully and completely provide for your every need according to His infinite wealth by means of the glorious power residing in the unique Person of Christ Jesus.”

Genesis 47:13-26 presents to us the record of Joseph enslaving the Egyptians to Pharaoh. The purpose of this passage is to demonstrate the severity of the famine and the desperate situation that the Egyptians found themselves dealing with and how Joseph delivered them.

This passage is divided into three sections: (1) The Egyptians exchange silver for grain (Genesis 47:13-14) (2) The Egyptians mortgage herds for grain (Genesis 47:15-17) (3) The Egyptians mortgage land and become slaves for grain (Genesis 47:18-26).

As we will see, at the end of the famine, all the Egyptians except for the priests, became slaves of Pharaoh in the sense that they became tenants of royal lands paying one-fifth of their produce to Pharaoh (Genesis 47:24-25), and this policy was

still being practiced up to the day when Moses penned the Pentateuch.

Genesis 47:13

“Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine.”

The Hebrew text reads, “However, there was no bread in all the region because the famine was very severe both the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan were exhausted from the famine.”

The New International Version translates the passage correctly, “There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine.”

“Now” in the NAS and “however” in the NIV translate a *w^e* (W+) (waw) disjunctive construction meaning we have the conjunction *w^e* followed by a noun and then a verb.

In our passage, we have the conjunction *w^e* followed by the noun *lechem* (<j#l#) (lekh-em), “bread, food,” which is followed by the substantive *ayin* (/y!a^) (ay-yin), “there was no.”

This *w^e* disjunctive construction expresses a contrast rather than a transition, which the New American Standard erroneously does by translating this construction with the word “now” and the New International does by translating it “however.”

In our passage, this *w^e* disjunctive construction expresses a contrast between the abundant food provisions and prosperity that Joseph’s family enjoyed during the last five years of the famine with the Egyptians and Canaanites who lacked food and went bankrupt from the famine.

The “the land of Canaan” is mentioned three times in Genesis 47:13-15 in order to remind the reader of Israel’s fate if he and his family had remained in Canaan and Joseph had not delivered them from the famine there by counseling his family to migrate to Egypt.

“Languished” in the NAS and “wasted away” in the NIV is the verb *lahah* (hh*!*) (law-hah),

which means, “to be exhausted.” This verb is used with reference to both the land of Egypt and Canaan and their inhabitants since Genesis 47:13 is used in contrast with Genesis 47:12, which records the Israelites having plenty of food and provisions.

Genesis 47:14

“Joseph gathered 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.”

Genesis 41:56 records that Joseph sold grain to people rather than giving it away since this would enable him to maintain strict control over the supplies in order to prevent looting, waste and corruption. Joseph knew that these vast reserves of grain that had been accumulating during the seven year of bumper crops would have to be carefully maintained to last throughout the seven years of famine. It would have been irresponsible, unwise and shortsighted of Joseph if he had simply given away the grain rather than sell it.

Also, 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 the grain away would have meant bankrupting the government and thus destroying it. Therefore, Joseph sold to those who could afford to purchase grain and it is reasonable to assume that he did not charge those who were unable to buy or, more than likely he employed these individuals for government service in order to earn the necessary cash or credit to purchase grain.

“Money” is the noun *keseph* ([s#K#) (keh-sef), which means, “silver” which in the Near East in the days of the patriarchs was used as a measure of value and was also a mark of wealth.

“Grain” is the noun *shever* (rb#v#) (sheh-ver), which derives its meaning from the verb *shavar* (rb^v*) (shaw-var), which means, “to break” hence “that which breaks out of the shell,” that is “grain.” Therefore, Joseph was selling “threshed” grain, which was used for food and not seed.

The statement “Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house” means that Joseph deposited the money from the sale of grain into the royal

treasuries and implies that Joseph took nothing for himself, thus demonstrating his honesty and integrity as a public official.

Exodus 20:15, "You shall not steal."

Psalms 119:36, "Incline my heart to Your testimonies and not to dishonest gain."

Proverbs 28:16, "A leader who is a great oppressor lacks understanding, but he who hates unjust gain will prolong his days."

Genesis 47:15

"When the money was all spent in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, 'Give us food, for why should we die in your presence? For our money is gone.'"

Genesis 47:16

"Then Joseph said, 'Give up your livestock, and I will give you food for your livestock, since your money is gone.'"

Genesis 47:17

"So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them food in exchange for the horses and the flocks and the herds and the donkeys; and he fed them with food in exchange for all their livestock that year."

According to Genesis 45:5, the famine had been in the land of Egypt and Canaan for two years. All private reserves of wheat have been exhausted, and all the silver of Egypt and Canaan had been spent in buying government grain from Joseph and yet the famine continued and was very severe. In desperation the Egyptians approached Joseph, reminding him of their need for food and that they had no money with which to purchase food.

Joseph knew that while their money was gone, they still possessed many cattle. Had these cattle remained the possession of the Egyptians they would have perished, for there was no grass for pasture and no grain for feed. Only Pharaoh would want them since no one could sustain them through these years of famine and drought. Therefore, we can see that Joseph did the Egyptians a favor by taking the cattle off their hands and exchanging them for grain which they needed to survive.

Some of these livestock may have been purchased by the Israelites, who were keepers of flocks (46:34) and who were relatively unaffected by the famine (47:27). Many, if not all, of the flocks which Joseph purchased for Pharaoh may have been cared for by Joseph's brothers (cf. 47:6).

Genesis 47:18

"When that year was ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, 'We will not hide from my lord that our money is all spent, and the cattle are my lord's. There is nothing left for my lord except our bodies and our lands.'"

Genesis 47:19

"Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for food, and we and our land will be slaves to Pharaoh. So give us seed, that we may live and not die, and that the land may not be desolate."

The sale of their livestock enabled the Egyptians to live through another year but as the following year approached, they found themselves once again appealing to Joseph for grain to stay alive. However, now they did not have either money or cattle, but they still possessed two valuable commodities, namely, land and labor.

At their own suggestion, the Egyptians exchanged their land and their labor for grain. Their land would belong to Pharaoh, they said, and they would be his slaves. Joseph also agreed to provide them with grain for seed when the famine ended and planting time came (47:18-19).

Genesis 47:20

"So Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, for every Egyptian sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. Thus the land became Pharaoh's."

Genesis 47:21

"As for the people, he removed them to the cities from one end of Egypt's border to the other."

Genesis 47:22

"Only the land of the priests he did not buy, for the priests had an allotment from Pharaoh, and

they lived off the allotment which Pharaoh gave them. Therefore, they did not sell their land.”

Notice that the Egyptian people were moved in from the rural areas to the cities (Genesis 47:21), which was done for administrative purposes. The first reason is that since the grain was stored in the cities according to Genesis 41:35, it could be more efficiently distributed with the people residing in the cities.

Another reason why Joseph transferred the people to the cities was to make the transfer of ownership more tangible and permanent since once their land was left, there would not be as much emotional attachment to the land.

Archaeologists have discovered records from earlier times in Egypt, which demonstrate there was private ownership of land but then there are records from a later period of Egypt’s history, which show that all the land in Egypt was owned by Pharaoh.

Genesis 47:23

“Then Joseph said to the people, ‘Behold, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh; now, here is seed for you, and you may sow the land.’”

Genesis 47:24

“At the harvest you shall give a fifth to Pharaoh, and four-fifths shall be your own for seed of the field and for your food and for those of your households and as food for your little ones.”

It is interesting that the Egyptians presented the terms of their servitude and not Joseph according to Genesis 47:23-24. Therefore, we see that Joseph acquired both the people and their land for Pharaoh and when the famine came to an end, he would provide them with seed for planting.

Then, when crops were once again harvested, one fifth would be given to Pharaoh and the remaining four-fifths would belong to the people for food, fodder, and seed for the next crop. This 20 percent tax was not burdensome for the people or exorbitant in the days of Joseph since some landlords in some countries exacted as much as 50 percent of the crops.

Genesis 47:25

“So they said, ‘You have saved our lives! Let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's slaves.’”

Genesis 47:26

“Joseph made it a statute concerning the land of Egypt valid to this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth; only the land of the priests did not become Pharaoh's.”

In Genesis 47:20-26, we see that the ownership of the land in Egypt changed hands except all the land that was acquired by the Israelites (See Genesis 47:27) or maintained by the priests, who were supported (like the Israelites) by Pharaoh (See Genesis 47:22).

Notice also that Moses writes that this policy was still in existence in his day, which meant it was still in effect over four hundreds after Joseph established it according to Genesis 47:26.

There are some who criticize Joseph for enslaving the Egyptian people to Pharaoh but this criticism is unfair for the following reasons: First of all, Pharaoh and not Joseph owned the grain, thus Joseph is not guilty of any injustice for selling the grain rather than giving it away because it was not his to give.

Also, Joseph did not profit but rather Pharaoh did and it was his duty to further Pharaoh’s interests, and this he did very well and thus he was being a good and faithful employee and servant of Pharaoh.

Another thing we must consider is that the “slavery” which the Egyptians submitted to was not harsh and unfair but rather was more of an arrangement that a “sharecropper” would make with a land owner and could still do in our nation today.

Slavery to these Egyptians meant the non-ownership of their lands and a 20% tax on their production, which Americans in the 21st century would love to have. Also, the Word of God does “not” condemn slavery and was practiced among the Israelites. The nation of Israel was permitted by the Lord God to make slaves of those whom they conquered in battle (Lev. 25:44-46; Num. 31:26-28; Ecc. 2:7) and the apostles

never condemned slavery and neither did our Lord.

The Word of God never commands slaves to seek their freedom or leave their masters or rebel against them but slaves who had the opportunity to gain their freedom by legal means were not condemned for doing so, but were encouraged (1 Cor. 7:21). Paul taught Christian slaves that they were in reality slaves of the Lord and therefore, were in reality serving Him since He purchased them out of the slave market of sin with His spiritual death on the cross (See 1 Corinthians 7:20-24).

In the days of the patriarchs and ancient Israel, slavery was the accepted way of bailing out the destitute and under a compassionate master was a comfortable existence (See Exodus 21:5-6; Deuteronomy 15:12-17).

Another reason why Joseph should not be criticized for enslaving the Egyptians to Pharaoh is that the Egyptians themselves praised him and regarded him as their savior according to Genesis 47:25!

We must remember that it was the Egyptians and not Joseph who suggested this arrangement in the first place according to Genesis 47:19 and then they gratefully submitted to it according to Genesis 47:25.

Furthermore, we must not condemn Joseph for enslaving the Egyptians to Pharaoh since the Egyptians have only themselves to blame for placing themselves in such a vulnerable position. Remember, that Joseph did not create the seven years of plenty or the seven years of famine but rather he predicted both and proposed a program to deal with them. His plan did cost the Egyptians their fortunes and some of their freedom, but it also saved them from certain death.

Since the Scriptures describe Joseph as a fabulous administrator, he undoubtedly informed the people of Egypt about the coming seven years of plenty followed by the seven years of famine and the plan that he proposed to Pharaoh to deal with the seven years of famine. This would secure the people of Egypt's cooperation in carrying out the plan Joseph had proposed to alleviate the devastation of the coming years of famine. Therefore, Joseph

would have encouraged everyone in Egypt to follow his example in preparing for the famine by saving during the years of prosperity.

If you recall, Joseph accumulated one fifth of the crops of the land during the abundant years, which left four-fifths of a bumper crop for the Egyptians. The Egyptians should have been storing up grain for the famine as Joseph was doing for Pharaoh but rather it appears that the Egyptian people thought the years of plenty would go on forever. They were much like the antediluvians in Noah's day who would not listen to Noah warn them about the impending disaster of the flood. Therefore, the Egyptians were informed that hard times economically were coming, yet they failed to prepare for them. No wonder they did not complain about Joseph's handling of this matter and praising him as their savior.

In Genesis 47:27-31, we will see Joseph swearing to his father that he will bury him in Canaan.

Genesis 47:27

“Now Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen, and they acquired property in it and were fruitful and became very numerous.”

Genesis 47:27 contrasts the prosperity of the Israelites with that of the poverty of the Egyptians, which is noted in Genesis 47:13-26. Of course, the Israelites prospered at Egypt's expense in the sense that they acquired land at a cheap price from Egyptian farmers who knew they would lose their land anyway due to the famine.

The Israelites would have purchased cattle from Egyptian farmers, which would have died from starvation. However, this prosperity that Israel experienced led eventually to the Egyptians resenting them and persecuting them.

There is nothing evil about being wealthy and prosperous since money in and of itself is not evil but rather the “love” of money is what is evil.

1 Timothy 6:10-11, “For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs. But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

The Lord did say that you can't serve both God and money.

Matthew 6:24, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Spiritual and material prosperity originate from the Lord.

Psalms 50:10, "For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills."

The attainment of the wisdom of the Lord is superior to the acquiring of temporal wealth (See Proverbs 3:13-18).

Proverbs 3:13-15, "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; And nothing you desire compares with her."

God is most concerned with our "spiritual" prosperity rather than our "temporal" prosperity since our spiritual growth into greater Christ-likeness is His objective for our lives from eternity past according to Romans 8:29.

This "spiritual" prosperity is experienced through fellowship with God and involves a more intimate fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and greater Christ-likeness and rewards.

The Lord Jesus Christ commanded believers to give generously and share their material prosperity with other believers (Matt. 5:42; 10:8; Luke 6:30, 38).

Luke 6:38, "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure pressed down, shaken together and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

The apostle Paul taught that the church age believer is to contribute to the needs of the royal family of God (Rom. 12:13).

Romans 12:13, "contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality."

The apostle Paul reminded pastor-teachers at Pastor's conference to help members of the royal family of God in need and then reminds them of our Lord's doctrinal teaching on the subject of giving (Acts 20:35).

Acts 20:35, "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The noun "Israel" and the verb *yashav*, "lived" are in the singular whereas the verbs *achaz*, "they acquired property" and *parah*, "were fruitful" and *ravah*, "became numerous" are all in the plural demonstrating the unity as a corporate unit between the patriarch and the nation that descended from him. Therefore, the name "Israel" emphasizes that the patriarch has become a nation, which is a fulfillment of the Lord's promise to make out of his descendants, a nation, which is recorded in Genesis 35:11.

Genesis 35:11, "God also said to him, 'I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.'"

In Genesis 35:11, the promise "a nation... shall come from you" in a "near" sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) throughout history and in a "far" sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

The name "Israel" emphasizes that the patriarch has become a nation, which is a fulfillment of the Lord's promise to make out of Israel's descendants a "great nation," which is recorded in Genesis 46:3.

Genesis 46:3, "He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.'"

The word "great" refers both to numbers and to significance or impact the nation of Israel would have on both human and angelic history.

Prophetically, the promise "a great nation" in a "near" sense refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) throughout history and in a "far"

sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

“Lived” is the verb *yashav* (b^vy*) (yaw-shav), which means, “to live in a place for a period of time” and does “not” mean to live in a place permanently. Therefore, this verb indicates that Israel lived in the land of Egypt, in Goshen for an unspecified period of time, which according to the prophecy given to Abraham in Genesis 15:12-16 was four hundred years. Although this would be a long term migration from the human perspective, from the divine perspective it would not be permanent.

The statement “they were fruitful...and became very numerous” means that Israel’s descendants were prolific in that they produced a multitude of children and is also a fulfillment of his father Isaac’s Spirit inspired desire in Genesis 28:3 that the Lord make him “fruitful” and to “multiply” his descendants.

Genesis 28:3, “May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may become a company of peoples.”

The statement “they were fruitful...and became very numerous” is also a fulfillment of the will of the Lord that Israel would “Be fruitful and multiply” which is recorded in Genesis 35:11.

Genesis 35:11, “God also said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you.’”

Lastly, the statement “they were fruitful...and became very numerous” anticipates the statement that appears in Exodus 1:7.

Exodus 1:7, “But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.”

The statement in Exodus 1:7 is a reference to the nation of Israel four hundred years after Israel’s family arrived in Egypt.

Genesis 47:28

“Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years; so the length of Jacob’s life was one hundred and forty-seven years.”

The name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” (yah-ak-ove) (bq{u&y^}) implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy. Therefore, the name “Jacob” often is used in Scripture to signify that the patriarch is living in his old Adamic sin nature. However, the name at times such as in Genesis 46:2-8, is also used to signify the patriarch’s weakness in his advance age and his lack of confidence in his own strength.

The use of the name “Jacob” in Genesis 47:28 implies that the patriarch was living according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

The name “Jacob” in Genesis 47:28 signifies that the patriarch has acknowledged his own human weakness or impotence so as to experience the power of God in life and his right to appropriate that power by prayer and claiming the divine promises given to him.

It is interesting that Jacob spent the last seventeen years of his life under the care of his son Joseph whereas Joseph spent the first seventeen years of his life under the care of his father Jacob. This reflects the providence of God in the lives of both men in the sense that their lives were not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

It is also interesting that only four verses were devoted to the death of Abraham (See Genesis 25:7-10) and two were devoted to the death of Isaac (See Genesis 35:28). However, the death of Jacob is recorded in great detail since the account of his death is recorded in Genesis 47:28-50:14. The reason for this is due to the special circumstances surrounding Jacob’s death in that of all the patriarchs, he was the only one who did “not” die in the Promised Land. Therefore, Jacob’s demand to be buried in Canaan and the

arrangements for his burial there are recorded in great detail.

Nahum Sarna gives a fascinating quote regarding the age of Jacob, he writes, “The lifespans of the three patriarchs lend themselves to factorization according to the following pattern: Abraham $175=5 \times 5 \times 7$; Isaac $180=6 \times 6 \times 5$; Jacob $147=7 \times 7 \times 3$. In this series, the squared number increases by one each time while the coefficient decreases by two. Furthermore, in each case the sum of the factors is 17. Through their factorial patterns, the patriarchal chronologies constitute a rhetorical device expressing the profound biblical conviction that Israel’s formative age was not a concatenation of haphazard incidents but a series of events ordered according to God’s grand design” (JPS Torah Commentary, page 324, Jewish Publication Society).

Genesis 47:29-30

“When the time for Israel to die drew near, he called his son Joseph and said to him, ‘Please, if I have found favor in your sight, place now your hand under my thigh and deal with me in kindness and faithfulness. Please do not bury me in Egypt, but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.’ And he said, ‘I will do as you have said.’”

The name “Israel” means, “one who fights (both God and men) and overcomes with the power of God.” The name memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob’s struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God. The name “Israel” reflects strength and character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer. Therefore, the use of this name signifies that Jacob is not walking in his flesh at this point in the narrative but is walking by faith (See 1 Corinthians 5:7).

By requesting that his son Joseph bury him in the land that the Lord promised him, Israel was demonstrating his faith in the Lord’s promise to give to him and his descendants the land of Canaan.

The expression “Please, if I have found favor in your sight” is deferential language, which is normally used by an inferior when speaking to a superior. It is used by Israel since Joseph possesses power and authority as the prime minister of Egypt and it expresses Israel’s dependence upon Joseph.

The command “place your hand under my thigh” is a euphemism for genitalia (Compare Genesis 24:2-3; Exodus 1:5; Judges 8:30) and was a symbolical gesture for securing one’s last will by an oath at the source of life. Therefore, by putting his hands under Joseph’s thigh and touching his genitals, Joseph was giving an oath that was special and solemn.

Israel’s request “deal with me in kindness and faithfulness” means that Israel who is dying is dependent upon Joseph who is in the prime of life. It also means that Israel is requesting that Joseph guarantee that he will bury him according to the covenant promises regarding the land of Canaan.

The statement “when I lie down with my fathers” is a reference to Israel’s physical death.

“My fathers” is a reference to Abraham and Isaac as indicated by the phrase “their burial place,” which is a reference to the cave of Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac were buried.

Genesis 23 records that for four hundred shekels of silver, Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite “the cave of Machpelah” as a burial plot for Sarah, himself and his descendants.

“Machpelah” is located west of modern Hebron on the outskirts and the city is situated on the eastern slope of a narrow valley, which runs north and south and is surrounded by rocky hills. The cave itself was located at the end of a field and Josephus mentioned a “monument of the patriarchs,” which stood in Hebron in the days of Jesus.

Abraham bought this gravesite in the land of Canaan in the confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise to give the land of Canaan to himself and his descendants as a permanent possession. Not only was Sarah buried at this site but so also were Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there as well (See Genesis 25:9; 35:27, 29, 49:31; 50:13).

All of these demonstrated their faith in God's promises to give them the land of Canaan by being buried with Sarah. The presence of the grave site among their descendants in later years would be mute but eloquent testimony to them all that the patriarchs were sure that God would fulfill His promises to give them the land of Canaan.

Israel's request "Please do not bury me in Egypt, but when I lie down with my fathers, you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place" is a reference to the Lord's promise to him, which is recorded in Genesis 35:12.

Genesis 35:12, "The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you."

Genesis 35:12 is a reference to the "Palestinian" covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original "Abrahamic" covenant and amplified the land features of the "Abrahamic" covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

Joseph agrees to his father's request and fulfilled it as recorded in Genesis 50.

Genesis 47:31

"He said, 'Swear to me.' So he swore to him. Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed."

Bruce K. Waltke makes the following comment regarding Israel's request recorded in Genesis 47:31, he writes, "Jacob demands an oath to make it official (cf. 25:29-33) and to make Joseph directly accountable to God. Also, Jacob needs assurance because he knows the difficulty of the assignment in light of Pharaoh's power. Pharaoh refers to the oath in granting permission (cf. 50:6)." (Genesis, page 592, Zondervan).

When Joseph agrees to his father's request, Israel leaned on top of his staff in an inaudible prayer of thanksgiving and praise to the Lord that his final request will be fulfilled.

The statement "Then Israel bowed in worship at the head of the bed" is incorrectly translated and should be translated "then Israel in worship leaned on top of his staff."

Now, the original Hebrew text does "not" contain vowels since a certain group of Jewish scholars who lived from A.D. 500- 950 and were called the "Massoretes" added vowels to the Hebrew text for pronunciation purposes. Therefore, in Genesis 47:31, "bed" is the noun *mtth* but this word became *mittah* (hF*m!) (mit-taw) when the Massoretes added vowels to the text. However, the writer of Hebrews took the letters to stand for *matteh* (hF#m^) (mat-the), "staff" rather than the noun *mittah*, "bed."

Therefore, Israel did not bow in worship at the head of his bed but rather he leaned on top of his staff and this interpretation is confirmed by Hebrews 11:21, which states, "By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, leaning on the top of his staff." The leaning on the top of his staff by Israel was a symbolic gesture of prostration since he was too old and feeble to bow to the ground.

Genesis 48

Genesis 48 is divided into four sections: (1) The introduction to Jacob blessing Joseph (48:1-2). (2) Jacob adopts Joseph's sons in order to elevate them to the status of founding fathers (48:3-12). (3) Jacob confers blessing on Joseph who is represented by his sons with Ephraim receiving the greater blessing (48:13-20). (4) Jacob gives Joseph the portion of the land he took from the Amorites (48:21-22).

Although Jacob adopts Joseph's two sons, giving them founding father status, which would make the total number of tribes in Israel as thirteen, the number of tribes in Israel still remained at twelve by eliminating the tribe of Levi's territorial share (See Joshua 14:1-4).

Genesis 48-50 brings to a conclusion the story of Jacob, which began in Genesis 35 and the story of Joseph, which began in Genesis 37.

There are two significant themes recorded in Genesis 48: (1) Jacob adopts Joseph's sons and elevates them to the status of Israelite tribes. (2) Ephraim receives a greater status over the first-born Manasseh.

Genesis 48:1-4 records Joseph visiting his father after being informed that he has become sick and

his father in turn recalls the promises that God gave him before entering into the ceremony of adopting Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 48:1

“Now it came about after these things that Joseph was told, ‘Behold, your father is sick.’ So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim with him.”

“After these things” refers to the oath ceremony where Joseph agreed to his father's request to have him buried in the land of Canaan, which is recorded in Genesis 47:27-31 and marks the final stage of Jacob's life.

The expression “Joseph was told” indicates that Joseph did not live with his father in Goshen but rather resided in Memphis due to his responsibilities as prime minister of Egypt, which would keep him distant from his family.

The statement “Behold, your father is sick” is the first reference in the Bible to sickness and refers to the fact that Jacob is terminally ill.

Joseph's firstborn was “Manasseh” (*m^enashsheh*) (hv#n^m+) (men-ash-sheh) whose name means, “He who causes to forget” as indicated by Joseph's statement “For God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.”

Manasseh's birth is recorded in Genesis 41:51, “Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household.’”

The name “Manasseh” is derived from the verb *nashah* (hv#n^m+) (naw-shaw), which means, “to forget” and appears also in Genesis 41:51 and is translated “forget.”

The verb *nashah*, “forget” does “not” mean the loss of memory of his adversities related to his brothers selling him into slavery but rather it means the hurt or the sting has gone out of the memory since God has blessed him greatly in Egypt. In fact, the mere mention of his father's household reveals that Joseph has not forgotten his father or brothers.

The phrase “all my trouble and all my father's household” is a “hendiadys” meaning that even

though there are two different expressions one idea is intended, thus it can be translated “all my trouble associated with my father's household.”

The name of Joseph's firstborn praises God for delivering him from all the adversities and heartbreak inflicted upon him by his brothers for selling him into slavery in Egypt.

The name “Manasseh” signifies that God had healed Joseph of the bitter memories of being sold into slavery by his brothers by blessing Joseph while in Egypt.

Job 5:18, “For He inflicts pain, and gives relief; He wounds, and His hands also heal.”

Psalm 147:3, “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.”

The second son that Asenath bore to Joseph was named “Ephraim” (*ephrayim*) (<y!r^p+a#) (ef-rah-yim) whose name means, “He has made me fruitful,” as indicated by Joseph's statement “For God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.”

Ephraim's birth is recorded in Genesis 41:52, “He named the second Ephraim, ‘For,’ he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.’”

The name “Ephraim” is derived from the verb *parah* (hr^P*) (paw-raw), which means, “to be fruitful” and appears also in Genesis 41:52 and is translated “has made me fruitful.”

The verb *parah* refers to abundant posterity (See Genesis 17:6, 20; 28:3; 48:4; Psalm 105:23-24), which is unusual that it should be used by Joseph after the birth of only his second child. Therefore, we can see that the verb *parah* along with the proper noun *ephrayim*, “Ephraim” forms a prophecy related to the tribe that would descend from Joseph's second son Ephraim. In fact, Moses in his farewell address recorded in Deuteronomy 33:13-17 bestows a fertility blessing upon Joseph and explicitly refers to the “ten thousands of Ephraim” and the “thousands of Manasseh.”

Joseph's two sons were twenty years of age since Genesis 41:50 records that Joseph's two sons were born a year before the famine and Genesis 47:28 records that Jacob lived in Egypt for seventeen years and Genesis 45:11 records that Jacob and his sons arrived in Egypt when there were five more

years of famine to come. Therefore, if Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years and arrived in Egypt with five years remaining in the famine and Joseph's sons were born a year before the famine, then Joseph's sons would be twenty years of age.

Genesis 48:1 lists Manasseh first since he was the first-born and Ephraim second and this is important since this represents Joseph's viewpoint that by primogeniture rights the older will be greater than the younger, however, Jacob will reverse it.

If you recall, in Genesis 25, we saw Esau was the firstborn son of Isaac and Rebekah, however, the Lord chose Jacob to inherit the blessings, privileges, promises and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant since he was a believer and Esau was not.

Also, in Genesis 38, we saw that even though Tamar's midwife used the scarlet thread to identify Zerah as Judah's firstborn, God considered Perez the firstborn as demonstrated in that he always appears before Zerah in the genealogical lists (See Genesis 46:12; Numbers 26:20-21; Matthew 1:3). The reason for this is that the ancestral lines of King David is traced back through Perez according to Ruth 4:18-22 as well as the human nature of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ according to Matthew 1:3 and Luke 3:33.

Genesis 48:2

“When it was told to Jacob, ‘Behold, your son Joseph has come to you,’ Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed.”

Notice the switch in names from “Jacob” to “Israel,” which is significant. Although, the name “Jacob” means, “heel catcher” implying someone who is a “deceiver” and a “supplanter,” which is a person who takes the place of another by force, scheming or strategy, the name is used here to signify the patriarch's weakness in his advance age and his lack of confidence in his own strength. The use of the name “Jacob” implies that the patriarch was living according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

2 Corinthians 12:9, “And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore,

I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”

The name “Jacob” signifies that the patriarch has acknowledged his own human weakness or impotence so as to experience the power of God in life and his right to appropriate that power by prayer and claiming the divine promises given to him.

The name “Israel” means, “one who fights (both God and men) and overcomes with the power of God” and memorializes the historical event of Jacob wrestling the preincarnate Christ, and which wrestling match symbolized Jacob's struggles in life with men, which in reality were with God.

The name “Israel” reflects strength and character produced by appropriating the power of God by claiming the promises of God.

The statement “Israel collected his strength and sat up in the bed” along with the change of name from “Jacob” to “Israel” indicates that the patriarch summoned the strength to sit up in bed by appropriating the power of God by claiming the promises of God or in other words, the promises God gave to him revived him.

Jacob sat up in bed also out of respect for Joseph and his office as prime minister of Egypt. Jacob is told that Joseph has arrived since Genesis 48:10 records that he was going blind and Joseph is announced to his father since Joseph is a great man in Egypt.

Genesis 48:3-4

“Then Jacob said to Joseph, ‘God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, and He said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you fruitful and numerous, and I will make you a company of peoples, and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession.’”

The expression “God Almighty” (Hebrew: *El Shaddai*) was first used by God of Himself when speaking to Abraham as recorded in Genesis 17:1. It was used by Isaac when blessing Jacob as recorded in Genesis 28:3 and was used by God once again when speaking to Jacob after he fulfilled his vow at Bethel as recorded in Genesis 35:11.

The title *El Shaddai*, “God Almighty” emphasizes the omnipotence of God and describes the Lord as being able to bring to pass that which He has promised to Jacob (See Romans 4:20-21).

Israel’s statement “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan” is a reference to the theophany that he received at Luz when he was returning to Canaan from Paddan Aram, which is recorded in Genesis 35:10-12.

A “theophany” is a theological term used to refer to either a visible or auditory manifestation of the Son of God before His incarnation in Bethlehem (Gen. 32:29-30; Ex. 3:2; 19:18-20; Josh. 5:13-15; Dan. 3:26).

Genesis 28:10-15 and Genesis 35:9-15 record that the patriarch received both a visible and auditory manifestation of the Son of God.

“Luz” was later named by Jacob “Bethel” after he received the theophany on the way out of the land of Canaan according to Genesis 28:19.

“Bethel” means, “house of God” and is approximately ten miles north of Jerusalem.

The fact that this is a reference to the theophany Israel received upon returning to Canaan is indicated by the three promises he mentions to Joseph, which were not given to him when he left Canaan for Paddan Aram. However, we must understand that the promises that Jacob received when leaving Canaan for Paddan Aram that are recorded in Genesis 28:10-19 are nearly identical in substance to the promises that he received when returning to Canaan, which are recorded in Genesis 35:10-12. Therefore, the promises that Jacob received in his two encounters with the Lord were probably one and the same in the mind of the patriarch.

Israel received six promises when he returned to Canaan, which are recorded in Genesis 35:10-12; however, in Genesis 48:4, he only mentions three of them to Joseph.

The first promise “I will make you fruitful and numerous” is a reference to the promise “be fruitful and multiply” and means that the Lord would give Jacob and his descendants the capacity to be prolific in producing posterity.

The second promise “and I will make you a company of peoples” is a reference to the promise “a company of nations...shall come from you” which refers to the twelve tribes of Israel.

“Peoples” is the noun *am* (<u^), which is used of people in terms of their being kinsmen, relatives or members of a tribe and so therefore, this word in Genesis 48:4 refers to the individuals belonging to the various twelve tribes of Israel.

“Nations” is the noun *goy* (yW{G) (go-ee), which refers to a specific group of people that form a political entity and so therefore, this word refers to the twelve tribes of Israel, each of which formed an independent political entity, as well as forming a nation when joined together.

The third promise “and will give this land to your descendants after you for an everlasting possession” is a reference to the promise “The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you” which is a reference to the land of Canaan.

The promise of “land” is a reference to the “Palestinian Covenant,” which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18). The “Palestinian” Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan. The boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18).

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8). The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

“Your descendants” refers to Jacob’s “biological” descendants, which would be the nation of Israel and it refers to his “spiritual” descendants, which refers to “born-again” Israel.

In a “near” sense “Your descendants” refers to the nation of Israel (saved and unsaved) and in a “far” sense it refers to saved Israel during the millennial reign of Christ.

“Blessed” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.”

Jacob would be “blessed” or in other words, “endued with power for success, prosperity, fecundity and longevity” by means of the Word of God since the Word of God is “alive and powerful” according to Hebrews 4:12.

Hebrews 4:12, “For the word of God is alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

By means of His Word, the Lord would fulfill His promise to Israel that he would “be fruitful and multiply” by enduing him with power for offspring in great numbers and to become “a company of peoples” and to possess the land of Canaan forever. Therefore, the statement “God Almighty...blessed me” means that Israel and his descendants would be the recipients and beneficiaries of the omnipotence of God, which would be manifested in time by the Lord fulfilling the three promises through Jacob and his descendants.

Genesis 48:5-12 records Jacob adopting Joseph’s two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

Genesis 48:5

“Now your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, are mine; Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.”

“Now” is composed of the conjunction *w^e* (W+) (waw) and the adverb *`attah* (hT^u^ (at-taw), which is used in a logical sense demonstrating Israel’s faith and logic in adopting Joseph’s two

sons. It expresses the idea that if God assured Israel that his descendants would become a “company of peoples,” then he was justified in adopting two more sons who would contribute to the numerical growth of his people.

Israel adopts Joseph’s two sons as his own and gives them equal standing with Joseph’s brothers as indicated by the statement “Ephraim and Manasseh shall be mine, as Reuben and Simeon are.” He was bestowing on Joseph the double portion of the birthright and was also in effect elevating Joseph to the level of himself.

The adoption of Joseph’s two sons by Israel put them on a par with Reuben and Simeon and as a result each of them would receive one portion, but in so doing Joseph received a double portion.

Joseph received the rights of the firstborn and a double portion of his father’s inheritance, which goes along with it and not Reuben who was Jacob’s firstborn since Reuben was stripped of his birthright as the firstborn because he had sex with his father’s concubine Bilhah (See Genesis 35:22; 49:3-4; 1 Chronicles 5:1).

1 Chronicles 5:1-2 speaks of the birthright being given to Joseph rather than Reuben because Reuben slept with his father’s concubine.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2, “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (for he was the firstborn, but because he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph the son of Israel; so that he is not enrolled in the genealogy according to the birthright. Though Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came the leader, yet the birthright belonged to Joseph).”

The firstborn had a privileged status (See Genesis 43:33; 49:3) and the right of succession (2 Chronicles 21:3) and received a double portion of his father’s inheritance (Deut. 21:17).

The father’s inheritance was divided among his sons and the firstborn always has right to two of these portions. Therefore, if there are ten sons, the firstborn receives two portions and the other nine split eight portions or if there are only two sons then the firstborn inherits everything.

As we noted in our study of Esau and Jacob, in the days of the patriarchs it was the custom of the day that the oldest son receive a double portion of the inheritance. However, the father could change this if in his opinion it warranted it and so Jacob was perfectly within his rights to transfer the birthright from Reuben to Joseph since the latter demonstrated that he was better suited for the responsibility than the former.

The Scriptures record that the birthright was transferable where the youngest can displace the eldest as in the cases of Joseph and Judah, Reuben, and Ephraim and Manasseh, Moses and Aaron, David and his six older brothers, Solomon and Adonijah.

Israel decided to bestow the double inheritance of the firstborn directly to Joseph's sons rather than to Joseph himself and by adopting Joseph's sons, Israel was making them of equal rank to Simeon and Levi.

Both Ephraim and Manasseh would be counted as Israel's two sons, which was important to understand when it came time to divide the land of Canaan since they would each receive a portion of land. Therefore, Joseph did not become a tribe in Israel but his two sons did.

Usually, the next oldest would receive the rights of the firstborn and the double portion of the father's inheritance but in the case of Simeon and Levi who were the next oldest, they too lost out on the firstborn status and inheritance because they were guilty of the massacre of all the men of Shechem (See Genesis 34; 49:5-6). Therefore, we see that Joseph received this privileged status in an unusual way.

Genesis 48:1 lists Manasseh first since he was the first-born and Ephraim second and this is important since this represents Joseph's viewpoint that by primogeniture rights the older will be greater than the younger. However, in Genesis 48:5 the names flip flop expressing Israel's Spirit guided intention to put Ephraim first in the blessing (See Genesis 49:19-20) and anticipating the leadership role he would have.

In the adoption ceremony, Israel would have placed the two boys by his knees, which would

symbolize his giving them birth in place of Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.

The fact that Israel adopted his grandchildren was not unusual in the days of the patriarchs and is well attested in the Bible (See Ruth 4:16-17; Esther 2:7). Records of grandfathers adopting their grandchildren are also well attested in ancient Near Eastern documents.

Genesis 48:6

“But your offspring that have been born after them shall be yours; they shall be called by the names of their brothers in their inheritance.”

Israel's statement “but your offspring that have been born after them (Ephraim and Manasseh) shall be yours” means that while Ephraim and Manasseh were now considered as his sons (See Numbers 26:28-37; 1 Chronicles 7:14-29), any other children Joseph might have in the future were to be considered his.

The statement “they shall be called by the names of their brothers” means that although any children born to Joseph in the future would be considered his, they would perpetuate the names of Ephraim and Manasseh and be incorporated into the tribes that bear their names (See Genesis 38:6; Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

“Inheritance” is the noun *nachalah* (חֵלֶקֶת) (nakh-al-aw), which denotes some type of property, which was inalienable and within the context of Genesis 48:6 refers to the land of Canaan, which God promised to Israel. Therefore, the prepositional phrase “in their inheritance” refers to the distribution of land among the twelve tribes of Israel.

The prepositional phrase “in their inheritance” means that Joseph's territory in the land of Canaan would be divided into two tribes because Levi did not receive land (See Joshua 14:4), thus there was still a total of twelve tribes in Israel and not thirteen. It means that any other children born to Joseph would not constitute separate tribal entities but rather would be incorporated into the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh and would partake of the inheritance of these two.

Genesis 48:7

“Now as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died, to my sorrow, in the land of Canaan on the journey, when there was still some distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem).”

In Genesis 48:7, Israel gives the “reason” why he is adopting Ephraim and Manasseh.

Rachel was not only Israel’s favorite wife but she was also chosen by him whereas Leah he did not choose and neither did he choose Bilhah and Zilpah, the concubines. Israel wanted Joseph to know that as the oldest son of Rachel, who was the one he intended to marry and not Leah, that Joseph should have the birthright with its double portion of the inheritance. However, since the custom of the time would not ordinarily permit this, Israel found a way of blessing Joseph’s two sons.

The fact that Joseph’s two sons received the double portion of the inheritance was fully justified since Joseph delivered the entire family from starvation and was thus his by merit.

The name “Paddan” is the proper noun *Paddan* (/D*P^) (pad-dawn), which means “field, plain” and refers to the city of Nahor, which was founded by Abraham’s brother who named it after himself and was the place in which Laban resided and is also called in Scripture “Paddan Aram.”

The death of Rachel while giving birth to Benjamin is recorded in Genesis 35:16-20.

“Ephrath” is the proper noun *ephmathah* (ht*r*ρ+a#) (ef-raw-thaw), which means, “fruitful region,” which according to Genesis 35:19 is the older name of “Bethlehem.”

Genesis 48:8

“When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, ‘Who are these?’”

Although Israel’s eyesight was poor, his question “who are these?” does not mean he didn’t recognize Ephraim and Manasseh because he was blind since he had proposed already to adopt them by name according to Genesis 48:5. Furthermore, it is very unlikely that Israel had never met Ephraim and Manasseh during his seventeen years in Egypt. In fact, Israel’s question “who are these?” was the second stage of the legal adoptive

process, namely, the establishment of the true identity of the candidates for adoption by formal interrogation of the natural father (Nahum Sarna, *JPS Torah Commentary*, Jewish Publication Society, page 327). Israel’s question calls to mind the question at a wedding where the pastor asks the question “who gives this woman to this man?” which is not said in ignorance but as part of the ceremony.

Genesis 48:9

“Joseph said to his father, ‘They are my sons, whom God has given me here.’ So he said, ‘Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them.’”

Notice that Joseph does “not” name his sons indicating that Israel knows their names.

Joseph’s statement “They are my sons, whom God has given me here (Egypt)” demonstrates that he considered Ephraim and Manasseh as gifts from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3, “Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward.”

This statement expresses Joseph’s faith in God’s promise of numerous descendants for the patriarchs.

Israel’s statement “Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them” expresses his intention to bless Ephraim and Manasseh. There is a touch of irony here in that in the past, we have seen that Jacob had secured his father’s blessing for himself by means of deceit whereas Joseph secures blessing for his sons by means of honesty.

“Bless” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B*) means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” Therefore, Israel is expressing his intention to “bless” Ephraim and Manasseh in the sense that he desires that God would “endue” them “with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in large numbers) and longevity.”

Genesis 48:10

“Now the eyes of Israel were so dim from age that he could not see. Then Joseph brought them close to him, and he kissed them and embraced them.”

“Were so dim” is the verb *kavedh* (db@K*) (kaw-vad), which is used in a figurative sense for the eyesight of Israel being poor implying that he could see but not well. This is indicated by Israel’s statement in Genesis 48:11 that God had let him see Joseph’s two sons, thus indicating he could see. Therefore, a comparison of the verb *kavedh*, which means, “were poor” and the statement in Genesis 48:11 “God has let me see your children as well” indicates that the statement in Genesis 48:10 “he (Israel) could not see” means that Israel “could not see well.” Like his father Isaac, Jacob’s eyesight failed him in his old age (See Genesis 27:1).

In Genesis 48:10, Joseph’s sons are brought closer to Israel for the adoption whereas in Genesis 48:13 they are brought close to him for the blessing.

Israel kissed and embraced his two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh while they were between his knees according to the statement in Genesis 48:12 that Joseph took the boys from Israel’s knees after the adoption ceremony. The fact that Israel kissed and embraced Ephraim and Manasseh was not only an expression of genuine affection for his grandchildren but it also these gestures held ritualistic significance and were a part of the adoptive process and was equivalent to saying that they were his children (See Waltke, Genesis, page 598, Zondervan).

Genesis 48:11

“Israel said to Joseph, ‘I never expected to see your face, and behold, God has let me see your children as well.’”

Israel’s two statements are an acknowledgement on his part of God’s providential care for him and his family as well as God’s grace who remained faithful to him even when he was unfaithful to God.

Israel’s statement “I have never expected to see your (Joseph’s) face” expresses his belief for many years that Joseph was dead, killed by wild animals.

Bruce K. Waltke gives an insightful comment, he writes, “The adoption ceremony begins with Joseph crediting God for his sons and ends with Jacob praising God. God blesses both father and grandfather through these boys. To Joseph they

are an incredible gift after years of affliction; to Jacob they are an incredible vision after he had lost all hope of ever seeing Joseph. Joseph’s and Jacob’s reflections of God’s present blessings set the spiritual milieu for the blessings that follow.” (Genesis, page 598, Zondervan)

Genesis 48:12

“Then Joseph took them from his knees, and bowed with his face to the ground.”

The statement “Joseph took them from his knees” indicates that the adoption ceremony has ended. The expression “from his knees” does not imply that Joseph’s twenty year old sons were sitting on the knees of Israel who was an elderly bed ridden man but rather it means that the boys had stood by their grandfather’s knees or leaned over them.

Out of great love and respect for his father and to honor him, Joseph is recorded as bowing down after removing his two sons from his father’s side. Even though Joseph was equal to Pharaoh, he still found it appropriate to honor his father by bowing down to him. Therefore, we see Joseph once again honoring his father with this act of respect.

Exodus 20:12, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

Genesis 48:13-20 records Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh. In Genesis 48:5-12 we have the account of the adoption ritual whereas in Genesis 48:13-20, we have the record of the blessing ritual.

Genesis 48:13

“Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right, and brought them close to him.”

Genesis 48:1 lists Manasseh first since he was the first-born and Ephraim second and this is important since this represents Joseph’s viewpoint that by primogeniture rights the older will be greater than the younger, however, Jacob will reverse it. Therefore, Joseph positions his two sons in such a way as to ensure that his father’s right hand, the symbol of action and power and blessing will rest on Manasseh, his firstborn since the eldest son would receive the greater blessing.

Throughout the Scriptures, the right hand side is regarded as the place of honor, strength, power, glory and blessing (See Exodus 15:6; Deuteronomy 11:29; Psalm 89:13; 110:1; Proverbs 3:16; Ecclesiastes 10:2; Matthew 25:33; Acts 2:33; Hebrews 1:3).

Genesis 48:14

“But Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, crossing his hands, although Manasseh was the firstborn.”

The Holy Spirit guides Israel to put his right hand on the head of the younger of Joseph's two boys, Ephraim and not Manasseh, the older of the two since it is the will of God that Ephraim and not Manasseh receive the greater blessing.

Israel put his right hand on the head of the younger son, Ephraim rather than the firstborn, Manasseh since the Holy Spirit gave him revelation that Ephraim would be greater than Manasseh as indicated by his explanation to Joseph as to why he gave Ephraim the greater blessing, which is recorded in Genesis 48:19. Therefore, the blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh was prophetic since it was inspired by God the Holy Spirit and spoke of their future descendants.

Genesis 48:19 records that Israel gave both boys the same blessing, thus indicating that the only reason why Israel blessed Ephraim with his right hand and not Manasseh was that God gave him revelation that Ephraim's descendants would become a multitude of nations. Further indicating that both boys receive the same blessing is that Israel blessed their father as recorded in Genesis 48:16.

Dr. Thomas L. Constable commenting on Israel laying his hands on Joseph's boys, writes, “This is the first of many scriptural instances of the laying on of hands (v. 14). By this symbolic act, a person transferred a spiritual power or gift to another. This rite was part of the ceremony of dedicating a person or group to an office (Num. 27:18, 23; Deut. 34:9; Matt. 19:13; Acts 6:6; 8:17; etc.), offering sacrifices, and the healings Jesus Christ and the apostles performed. In this case Jacob symbolically transferred a blessing from himself to

Joseph's sons. Once uttered, blessings were irreversible (cf. Num. 23:20; Rom. 11:29).” (Notes on Genesis, 2005 Edition, page 266)

Genesis 48:15-16

“He blessed Joseph, and said, ‘The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads and may my name live on in them, and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac and may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.’”

The statement “He (Israel) blessed Joseph” means that Israel is blessing Joseph through his two sons and this is indicated in that Joseph received the double portion of the family inheritance according to 1Chronicles 5:1-2 and both Ephraim and Manasseh were equally blessed according to Genesis 48:19.

Next, Israel identifies the Source of the blessing who is the one and only God and gives a three-fold description of Him referring to each member of the Trinity.

“The God” is composed of the definite article *ha* (h^), “the” and the noun *Elohim* (<yh!Oa\$), “God” and together they mean “the one and only God,” or “the one true God” in contrast to the multi-god culture of the heathen world.

The statement “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked” refers God the Father and to the fact that Israel's grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac lived in the presence of the one and only God or in other words, they experienced intimate fellowship with the one and only God.

Fellowship with the Lord constitutes living in the presence of God and involves confessing sin to the Father in order to be restored to fellowship followed by obedience to the Word of the Lord in order to maintain that fellowship (1 John 1:5-2:6) and to experience the covenant blessings.

Obedience to the Word of the Lord constitutes walking by means of faith meaning taking the Lord at His Word to deliver on His promises.

Therefore, the statement “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked” implies

that like Abraham and Isaac, Ephraim and Manasseh must live in the presence of God and experience intimate fellowship with Him in order to experience the covenant blessings.

As we have noted in our past studies of the book of Genesis the “Abrahamic” covenant was “unconditional” meaning that its fulfillment was dependent upon the Lord’s faithfulness. However, we have also noted that an unconditional covenant may have “blessings” attached to it that are conditioned on the response of the recipient and that response is simply faith or to trust that God will deliver on His promise, which expresses itself in obedience to the commands of God.

For example, the blessings that Abraham received in Genesis 12:1-3 were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord’s command to leave his country and his father’s house and go to the land, which the Lord would show him, namely, the land of Canaan.

The “blessings” that Abraham received in Genesis 22:17-18 were conditioned on his obedience to the Lord’s command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. The “fulfillment” of unconditional covenants does “not” depend on the continued obedience of the recipient but rather the faithfulness of God who instituted the covenant. Abraham and Isaac failed to operate in faith many times, yet the Lord remained faithful to the covenant promises He made to Abraham. The Lord was responsible to fulfill the agreement and Abraham’s part was to obey the Lord’s commands, which would manifest his faith in the Lord. Therefore, many of the “blessings” of the covenant were conditioned upon the patriarchs’ obedience whereas the “fulfillment” of the covenant depended upon the faithfulness of God rather than Abraham’s obedience.

The statement “The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked” implies Ephraim and Manasseh must also walk by faith in the promises of God in order to experience the covenant blessings that Abraham and Isaac experienced.

The statement “the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day” means that Israel acknowledges that throughout his life God the Holy Spirit has shepherded him by providing for him and protecting him and guiding him.

Psalm 23:1-3, “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

“Angel” is the noun *mal’akh* (Ea*1+m^)(mal-awk), which means, “messenger” is used in the Old Testament with reference to “elect” angels (Gen. 19:1; Ps. 91:11) and men (Deut. 2:26; Josh. 6:17) and of the “preincarnate” Christ (Gen. 22:11; Zech. 3:1). In Genesis 48:16, “the angel” is a reference to the “preincarnate” Christ since Israel in context Israel is speaking of His relationship to God.

The preincarnate Christ manifested Himself to Israel both visibly and audibly seven times in his life (1st time: Genesis 28:10-22; 2nd time: 31:3; 3rd time: 31:10-13; 4th time: 32:24-32; 5th time: 35:1; 6th time: 35:9; 7th time: 46:2).

The statement “the angel who has redeemed me from all evil” is therefore a reference to God the Son and means that Israel acknowledges that the preincarnate Christ had delivered him throughout his life from evil in the sense of harm.

“Redeem” is the verb *ga’al* (la^F*)(gaw-al), which means, “to deliver.”

“Evil” is the adjective *ra`* (ur^)(rah), which is often used to denote “independence from God, which is manifested by disobedience and rebellion,” however, Israel is speaking of “physical harm.”

The Lord had delivered Israel from physical harm many times in his life such as delivering him from Esau when fleeing Canaan (See Genesis 28:10-19), and when arriving back in Canaan (See Genesis 32), and He delivered him from Laban (See Genesis 32-33) and from the Canaanites and Perizzites (See Genesis 34).

Psalm 34:7, “The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, and rescues them.”

Next, Israel makes four requests of God for the sons of Joseph. The first request “bless the lads (Ephraim and Manasseh)” expresses Israel’s Spirit inspired desire that God would endue Ephraim and Manasseh with power for success, prosperity,

fecundity (offspring in large numbers) and longevity.

The second request “may my name live on in them” expresses Israel’s Spirit inspired desire that God would reckon that both Ephraim and Manasseh would be among the twelve tribes of Israel and perpetuate the family line.

The third request “(may) the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac (live on in them)” expresses Israel’s Spirit inspired desire that God would reckon Ephraim and Manasseh as part of the family that is heir to the blessings, privileges, responsibilities and promises of the Abrahamic covenant.

Israel’s fourth and final request “may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” expresses Israel’s Spirit inspired desire that the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh would become a multitude. This request was fulfilled according to a comparison of two censuses taken during the course of Israel’s wandering in the desert under Moses prior to entering Canaan under Joshua.

The combined number of males in Ephraim and Manasseh increased from 72,700 (See Numbers 1:32-35) in the second year after the Exodus to 85,200 forty years later (See Numbers 26:28-37). In contrast, the combined populations of Reuben and Simeon during the same period decreases from 105,800 to 65,930. In his farewell address, Moses in Deuteronomy 33:17 refers to the “myriads of Ephraim” and the “thousands of Manasseh.”

Genesis 48:17

“When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim’s head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father’s hand to remove it from Ephraim’s head to Manasseh’s head.”

Genesis 48:18

“Joseph said to his father, ‘Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.’”

It displeased Joseph that his father had put his right hand on the head of his youngest son Ephraim rather than the older of the two, Manasseh since he considered it a disregard of primogeniture rights meaning that the oldest son

was to receive a greater blessing than the younger. Joseph attempted to remove his father’s hand from Ephraim’s head since he undoubtedly thought that his father made an error due to his poor eyesight.

Just as Esau attempted to have his father Isaac reverse the blessing he gave to Jacob (See Genesis 27:34-36) so Joseph attempts to reverse the blessing given to Ephraim and have his father bestow it on Manasseh, the firstborn. However, once the blessing has been given it is irrevocable (See Numbers 23:20; Romans 11:29), which is especially true when the blessing is inspired by the Holy Spirit as was the case with both Jacob and Ephraim.

Joseph did not realize that God the Holy Spirit directed his father to place his right hand upon the head of Ephraim and pronounce a blessing on him that was prophetic.

Genesis 48:19

“But his father refused and said, ‘I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations.’”

Israel’s statement “I know, my son, I know” means that he understood which of the two young men were the firstborn, understanding fully primogeniture rights and indicates that it was intentional that he gave the blessing of the firstborn to Ephraim rather than Manasseh.

His statement “He also will become a people and he also will be great” means that Manasseh’s descendants would become one of the tribes of Israel and would have an impact on the nation.

“People” is the noun *am* (<u^), which is used of people in terms of their being kinsmen, relatives or members of a tribe.

The statement “However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations” means Ephraim’s descendants would have numerical superiority over his brother’s descendants and would have a greater impact upon the nation of Israel.

“Multitude” is the noun *m^olo* (aOm+) (mel-o), “fullness” and “nations” is the noun *goy* (yW{G)

(go-ee), which refers to a specific group of people that form a political entity, thus the text literally reads, “the fullness of nations.”

Notice that Israel prophesied that Manasseh would become a “people” in the sense of a tribe while on the other hand Ephraim’s descendants will become “the fullness of nations” indicating the numerical superiority that Ephraim’s descendants will have over those of Manasseh.

Bruce K. Waltke, “In the census taken in the second year after the Exodus, the male population of Ephraim is 20 percent more than that of Manasseh (See Numbers 1:33, 35). In the second census a generation later, however, the male population of Manasseh exceeds that of Ephraim (Numbers 26:34, 37) by 40 percent (cf. 1 Chronicles 7:20-23). Eventually, however, Ephraim gains the numerical superiority (cf. Deuteronomy 33:17).” (Genesis, page 600, Zondervan).

This blessing/prophecy was fulfilled during the Judges period when Ephraim had grown very large and influential and when the tribe of Ephraim took the lead among the ten northern tribes and flourished to the extent that the Jews used the name Ephraim equally with the name Israel.

Genesis 48:20

“He blessed them that day, saying, ‘By you Israel will pronounce blessing, saying, ‘May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh!’ Thus he put Ephraim before Manasseh.”

The prepositional phrase “by you” is in the singular referring to Joseph who is blessed through his two sons.

The noun *Elohim*, “God” is used rather than the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, “Lord” since Israel is emphasizing the omnipotence of God and that God is able to bring to pass that which He has purposed for Ephraim and Manasseh.

The statement “May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh” is a prophecy that the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh will be so blessed that future generations in Israel will invoke their names as a pattern for divine blessing and that they shall

in the course of time become proverbial for blessing in Israel.

We complete our study of Genesis 48 by noting verses twenty-one and twenty-two where we will read Israel reassuring Joseph of God’s presence and promise of the land of Canaan to the Israelites as well as giving Joseph’s descendants the tract of land he purchased outside of the city of Shechem.

Genesis 48:21

“Then Israel said to Joseph, ‘Behold, I am about to die, but God will be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers.’”

Israel’s statement “Behold, I am about to die” is a reference to his imminent physical death.

Death is the sovereign decision of God based upon the integrity of God and omniscient knowledge of all the facts.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, “There is an appointed time for everything, a time for everything under heaven. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die.”

Psalms 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.”

Ecclesiastes 7:1b, “The day of one’s death is better than the day of one’s birth.”

The death of a member of the human race is not ruled by chance or fate but according to the providence of God.

The doctrine of providence expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God Who reveals the purpose of providence through the work of Christ on the Cross.

“Physical” death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30).

At physical death, the unbeliever’s soul is separated from his physical body and goes to Torments, a compartment of Hades, which is called in the Old Testament “Sheol” (Luke 16:19-31).

The unbeliever’s physical body goes to the grave but is raised up at the Great White Throne

Judgment (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15) and their ultimate destiny is the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:12-15).

During the church age, the believer's physical body goes to the grave at physical death and his soul and human spirit go to be face to face with the Lord who is in the third heaven (2 Cor. 5:8). However, prior to the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints when they died did not go to the third heaven but rather to Paradise, which was a compartment of "Sheol," which in the New Testament is called "Hades."

These Old Testament saints such as Jacob ascended with Jesus Christ into heaven as part of our Lord's triumphal procession as victor in the angelic conflict and were part of the booty from our Lord's victory that was accomplished through His death and resurrection (See Ephesians 4:8).

The believer will receive a resurrection body at the resurrection of the church, which is called by theologians, the "rapture" of the church (See 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) whereas Old Testament saints like Jacob will receive their resurrection bodies at the Second Advent of Christ (See Ezekiel 37).

Jesus Christ's death on the Cross has freed us from the fear of death (See Hebrews 2:14-15). Notice in Genesis 48:21 that Jacob/Israel expresses no fear in dying.

Physical death cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

Death was designed by God to be your greatest testimony for the Lord in the pre-historic angelic conflict.

The Lord promises to wipe away every tear from our lives caused by the death of loved ones.

Revelation 21:5, "and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

Life hangs by a very fine thread that can be snapped at any moment and should motivate the believer to use the remainder of his time on earth

to execute God's plan for his life to become like Christ.

Romans 14:8, "For if we live, we live because of the Lord and if we die, we die because of the Lord therefore whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord."

Israel has already made arrangements with Joseph to be buried in Canaan and not in Egypt according to Genesis 47:27-31 and was buried in the cave of Machpelah where the bodies of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah were buried according to Genesis 50:1-13.

Israel reassures Joseph that even though he is about to die, God would be with him and his entire family.

"You" is in the plural meaning "all of you" referring of course to Israel's entire family, his sons, their wives, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The noun *Elohim*, "God" is used rather than the covenant name of God, which is *Yahweh*, "Lord" since Israel is emphasizing the omnipotence of God, which will protect the entire family of Jacob when he has died.

Israel reassures Joseph that "God will be with (all of) you" echoes God's recent promise to him "I will go down with you to Egypt," which is recorded in Genesis 46:4. It also echoes the Lord's promise to him "I am with you" which was given to him when he left Canaan and is recorded in Genesis 28:15 and also it echoes the promise made to his father Isaac "I will be with you" in Genesis 26:3.

This promise is a guarantee to Joseph of the Lord's presence in the lives of the entire family and that the family would be protected in Egypt. Therefore, we can see that by giving Joseph this reassurance of the Lord's presence in the life of the family, Israel is expressing his faith in the Lord's promise to him just prior to leaving for Egypt.

The promise "God will...bring you back to the land of your fathers" is a reference to the "Palestinian" covenant, which was a confirmation and enlargement of the original "Abrahamic"

covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The promise “God will...bring you back to the land of your fathers” is a “personal” promise in that it is a guarantee that Joseph would return to the land of Canaan not only in a coffin (See Genesis 49:29-32) but more importantly that he and all of born again Israel will live in the Promised Land in resurrection bodies during the millennial reign of Christ.

The promise “God will...bring you back to the land of your fathers” is not only a “personal” promise but also a “national” promise in that it is a guarantee that the Israelites will return to the land of Canaan.

“You” is in the plural meaning “all of you” referring of course to Israel’s entire family, his sons, their wives, his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The promise “God will...bring you back to the land of your fathers” is also a reference to the fulfillment of the prophecy recorded in Genesis 15:12-16 that Abraham’s descendants would be enslaved in a nation for four hundred years and that God would judge that nation and his descendants would return to Canaan.

Genesis 48:22

“I give you one portion more than your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow.”

Israel’s promise to Joseph “I give you one portion more than your brothers” is composed of the following: (1) The adjective *echadh* (dj*ā#) (ekh-awd), which is used as an indefinite article meaning “a portion of a larger amount, (2) The noun *sh^hkhem* (<k#v+) (shek-em), which refers to the city of Shechem.

The adjective *echadh* usually refers to the number one but at times it can be used as an indefinite article meaning “a portion of a larger amount” and thus it denotes a “portion” of the city of Shechem. Therefore, the Hebrew text literally reads, “a portion of Shechem.”

Genesis 33:18-19 records Jacob purchasing a plot of land from Hamor just outside the city of Shechem.

Genesis 33:18, “Now Jacob came safely to the city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Paddan-aram, and camped before the city.”

“Shechem” is the proper noun *sh^hkhem* (<k#v+) (shek-em), which means, “safe and sound” and is approximately thirty-five miles north of Jerusalem, directly west of the Jabbok River and approximately twenty miles from the Jordan in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 33:19, “He bought the piece of land where he had pitched his tent from the hand of the sons of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for one hundred pieces of money.”

“Piece of land” is composed of the noun *chelqah* (hq*l+j#) (khel-kaw), which refers to a well defined field or tract of land and the noun *sadheh* (hd#c*) (saw-deh), which means, “field” and refers to a well defined field or land without walls or fences. Therefore, Jacob bought a tract of land for his flocks just outside the city of Shechem as indicated by the statement in Genesis 33:18 that Jacob “camped by the city” and in Genesis 33:19 by the phrase “where he had pitched his tent.”

By allowing Jacob, now Israel to buy land and settle among them, the Canaanites and specifically, the Hivites were hoping to intermarry with Jacob’s family and this we have seen was prohibited by the Lord as stipulated in the prophecy of Noah.

Knowing the reluctance on the part of Middle East landowners in the days of the patriarchs to sell their land it was significant that Hamor sold a piece of property to Jacob since it demonstrated the desire of Hamor to marry into the family of Jacob, which was very wealthy. The wealth of Jacob’s family was very appealing to Hamor, making Jacob’s family appealing to intermarry with and thus Hamor was more than willing to part with a piece of property.

This intermarriage would mean that the Canaanites would absorb Jacob’s clan, making them a part of their culture and people, both of which were decadent. Therefore, Jacob has made a bad decision by purchasing this tract of land belonging to the Canaanites. The consequences of this decision are keenly felt in Genesis 34, which

records the rape of Jacob's daughter Dinah by Shechem, the son of Hamor.

Further evidence that the expression *sh^ekhem`achadh* in Genesis 48:22 is a reference to the plot of land that Jacob bought from Hamor just outside the city of Shechem is that Jacob sent Joseph to Shechem to determine if his brothers were safe (See Genesis 37:12-14).

Also, Joseph himself was buried in the city of Shechem according to Joshua 24:32 and Acts 7:16. Moreover, Shechem lay within the future territory of Ephraim and Manasseh near the border between the two tribes according to Joshua 17:7 and became the most important city in the kingdom of northern Israel according to 1 Kings 12:1, 25.

The term "Amorite" is a figure of speech called "synecdoche of the part" where a part is put for the whole meaning that the term "the Amorite" is put for the pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land of Canaan, many of which are listed in Genesis 15:19-21, of which "the Amorite" was a part of (Gen. 48:22; Nm. 13:29; 21:21).

Hamor and Shechem were identified as "Hivites" a Canaanite people according to Genesis 34:2 and so therefore, the term "the Amorite" is put for the Shechemites who were "Hivites," a Canaanite people.

The statement "I took from the hand of the Amorite with my sword and my bow" is a reference to Simeon and Levi's massacre of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah (See Genesis 34).

Israel's use of the personal pronoun "I" indicates that he is not placing responsibility for the massacre of Shechem on Simeon and Levi but rather is taking responsibility for it himself as the patriarch of the family. The reason why he is taking responsibility for their actions is that the massacre could have been avoided if he functioned in his role as the patriarch of the family and had taken control from the beginning.

Remember, Israel remained silent while his sons deceitfully proposed circumcision as the condition for intermarriage with the inhabitants of Shechem who were a Canaanite people and which proposal was out of the will of God since the Canaanites were under a curse according to Genesis 9:25.

Jacob failed as the leader of his family by remaining silent while his sons proposed circumcision as the condition for intermarriage with the Canaanites. Jacob should have taken control and stopped the negotiations with Shechem and Hamor once he heard his sons propose circumcision as a condition for intermarriage with the inhabitants of Shechem since the Lord prohibited his family to intermarry with Canaanites.

Jacob did not wait on the timing of God since he should not have purchased this land outside of Shechem and it was obviously wrong to take the city of Shechem by force. In His timing, the Lord was going to order Jacob's descendants, the Israelites to annihilate the inhabitants including the Hivites and take their land by force according to Deuteronomy 20:16-18.

Genesis 49

Genesis 49 gives us the record of Jacob/Israel bestowing prophetic blessings and antiblessings upon his twelve sons as well as giving instructions for his burial and this chapter records his death. Jacob employs a poem in order to communicate to his sons the future of their descendants, which is the first long poem in the Bible.

Just as Jacob's father Isaac had prophetically outlined the future of his two sons' families in Genesis 27 so Jacob prophetically outlined the future of his twelve sons. These prophecies cover the entire history of the nation of Israel from the conquest of Canaan to the millennial reign of Christ.

Interestingly, these "blessings" as in the case of Reuben, Simeon and Levi are in actuality "antiblessings," much like ones that Isaac bestowed upon Esau (See Genesis 27:30-40). If you recall, since Isaac gave everything to Jacob, all he had to give Esau was an "antiblessing," which is a parody on Jacob's blessing and were also prophecies concerning the future of Esau's descendants who were the Edomites. In the same way, the "antiblessings" given to Reuben, Simeon and Levi are a parody of the blessings bestowed upon Jacob's other nine sons and were also prophecies as well.

If you recall, Reuben was disqualified for leadership of the family because he had sex with his father's concubine according to a comparison of Genesis 25:21-22 and 1 Chronicles 5:1-2. Simeon and Levi were disqualified as a result of killing all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah according to Genesis 34. However, in relation to the nation of Israel's destiny, these "antiblessings" are a blessing in the sense that Reuben did not have the capacity for leadership because of his moral instability and immoral degeneracy. Therefore, Israel does the nation a favor and blesses the nation by promoting Judah rather than Reuben with his poor leadership abilities and in the same way, Israel protects the nation from the cruelty and violence of Simeon and Levi.

Another feature of this remarkable poem is that the name "Jacob" appears five times expressing the "weakness" of the patriarch and the name "Israel" appears the same number of times expressing the "strength" of the patriarch in the future of his sons.

Finally, it is fascinating that Jacob's life was prophesied before it began (Genesis 25:22-23) and in this chapter we see that it will end prophetically as well.

Genesis 49:1-4 records Israel pronouncing an antiblessing on Reuben, his firstborn because Reuben committed adultery and incest with his concubine Bilhah.

Genesis 49:1-2

"Then Jacob summoned his sons and said, 'Assemble yourselves that I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come.' Gather together and hear, O sons of Jacob and listen to Israel your father."

The expression "assemble yourselves" demonstrates that unlike his father Isaac who blessed him in secret, Jacob publicly blesses his twelve sons.

Israel's statement "That I may tell you what will befall you in the days to come" in the Hebrew literally reads, "I will tell to all of you what will happen to all of you in the last days."

The prepositional phrase "in the days to come" or "in the last days" indicates to Jacob's sons that the

blessings he is about to give to them are also "prophetic" in nature demonstrating that like his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac, he is a prophet.

Israel is speaking to the individual tribes personified as his sons, thus this expression refers to both the near and distant future and covers the entire history of the nation of Israel from the conquest of Canaan to the millennial reign of Christ.

By calling together his sons and commanding them to listen to what he is about to say to them, which concerns not only them but their future descendants, Israel is expressing his patriarchal authority as a father, a prophet of God and wise teacher who is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Genesis 49:3

"Reuben, you are my firstborn; My might and the beginning of my strength, preeminent in dignity and preeminent in power."

"Reuben" (/b@War+) (*r^e'uven*) (reh-oo-vane) was the first son that Leah bore to Jacob while in Paddan Aram according to Genesis 29:32 and his name means, "the Lord has seen my affliction."

The "firstborn" had a privileged status (See Genesis 43:33; 49:3) and the right of succession (2 Chronicles 21:3) and received a double portion of his father's inheritance (Deut. 21:17).

As we noted in our study of Esau and Jacob, in the days of the patriarchs it was the custom of the day that the oldest son receive a double portion of the inheritance. However, the father could change this if in his opinion it warranted it and so Jacob was perfectly within his rights to transfer the birthright from Reuben to Joseph since the latter demonstrated that he was better suited for the responsibility than the former.

Israel decided to bestow the double inheritance of the firstborn directly to Joseph's sons rather than to Joseph himself and by adopting Joseph's sons, Israel was making them of equal rank to Simeon and Levi.

In the book of Genesis, we have seen Cain lose his position because he murdered his brother Abel, Ishmael was the son of a concubine and not the son of the divine promise, Esau exchanged with

Jacob his birthright for a bowl of red lentil soup expressing his negative attitude towards the promises of God.

“My might” means that the birth of Reuben demonstrated Israel’s virility or manly character and “the beginning of my strength” means that Reuben was the first demonstration of Israel’s generative power or ability to produce children.

“Preeminent in dignity” means that as the first-born, Reuben would have been first in rank and destined to inherit the patriarchal authority and “preeminent in power” means that he could have expected to possess power or authority associated with being the patriarch of the family.

Genesis 49:4

“Uncontrolled as water, you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed; Then you defiled it -- he went up to my couch.”

“Uncontrolled as water” means that just as water is unstable so Reuben was unstable in the sense that he was arrogant, reckless, impetuous and undisciplined as demonstrated by his committing adultery and incest with his father’s concubine out of love for his mother and rejection for his father’s authority. This incident between Reuben and Jacob’s concubine, Bilhah was motivated by Reuben’s love for his mother Leah rather than sexual lust since by defiling Bilhah, he made certain that with Rachel’s death her maid could not supplant Leah as chief wife (Compare 2 Samuel 15:16; 16:22; 20:3).

Israel’s statement “you shall not have preeminence, because you went up to your father's bed” means that Reuben lost his status and position and privileges as the firstborn in the family by committing incest and adultery with his father’s concubine.

Deuteronomy 27:20, “Cursed is the man who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed.”

Israel’s statement “Then you defiled it” implies that the marriage bed is holy (See Hebrews 13:4) and that Reuben made it unholy by having sex with his concubine.

Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

“You” indicates that Israel looked right at Reuben revealing to him for the first time that although he did not say anything to him at the time about his crime, he was not ignorant of it.

Genesis 35:22 records that Israel when he heard of Reuben having sex with his concubine Bilhah did not express verbally his moral outrage towards this incident but in Genesis 49:4 he does so.

Genesis 35:22, “It came about while Israel was dwelling in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine, and Israel heard of it.”

“He went up to my couch” indicates that Israel turned from addressing Reuben to his other sons expressing his disgust with Reuben’s actions and that he was well aware of it even though he never said anything at the time.

Marriage was established by God in the Garden of Eden when He brought the Woman to Adam to be his helpmate (See Genesis 2:18-25) and so committing adultery would be sin against God because it would violate the divine institution of marriage.

The Word of God prohibits adultery.

Exodus 20:14, “You shall not commit adultery.”

Adultery begins in the heart.

Mark 7:21-23, “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

Matthew 5:27-28, “You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’ but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

The act of adultery takes place when the thought of adultery is acted upon.

James 1:13-15

"Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone."

"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."

"Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

Committing adultery is a manifestation of not loving your neighbor as yourself.

Romans 13:8-10

"Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law."

"For this, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,' and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"

"Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

The Scriptures condemn adultery.

Proverbs 6:32, "The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it."

Recovering from the sin of adultery demands the confession of the sin to the Father and then bringing one's thoughts in obedience to Christ, which constitutes obeying the commands of Ephesians 5:18 to be influenced by means of the Spirit and Colossians 3:16 to let the Word of Christ richly dwell in your soul.

1 John 1:9, "If any of us does at any time confess his sins, then, He (God the Father) is faithful and just with the result that He forgives us our sins and purifies us from each and every wrongdoing."

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

"For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of

our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses."

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."

Ephesians 5:18: "And do not permit yourselves to get into the habit of being drunk with wine because that is non-sensical behavior, but rather permit yourselves on a habitual basis to be influenced by means of the Spirit."

Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

The victim of adultery has two legitimate choices, forgiveness or divorce.

Ephesians 4:31-32, "Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

Not only did Reuben commit adultery but also incest, which the Mosaic Law prohibited because it dishonors the father and required the death penalty for both the man and the woman (See Leviticus 18:8; 20:11; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20).

Leviticus 20:11, 12

"If there is a man who lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

"If there is a man who lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed incest, their bloodguiltiness is upon them."

The fact that Reuben had sex with his father's wife was not only the sin of dishonoring his father but also an act of rebellion against his father's authority.

Exodus 20:12, “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.”

1 Samuel 15:23, “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.”

It is interesting that according to secular ancient Near Eastern culture, by having sex with his father’s concubine Reuben is attempting to usurp Jacob’s authority in his household (Compare 2 Samuel 3:7-8; 12:7-8; 16:21-22; 1 Kings 2:13-25).

Even though as the first-born, Reuben could have expected to possess the leadership of the tribes and the priesthood within the family and the double portion of the birthright, he forfeited these blessings by committing both incest and adultery with his father’s concubine. Consequently, the leadership of the tribes was given to Judah and the priesthood to Levi eventually (See Exodus 32:25-29; Numbers 3:12-13), and the double portion to Joseph.

Henry M. Morris writes, “In the history of Israel, the tribe of Reuben never furnished a leader of any kind for the nation as a whole. In the later journeys to the promised land, the Reubenites were the first tribe to ask for a place to settle, not waiting to cross the Jordan with the others (Numbers 32). They participated in the erection of an unauthorized place of worship (Joshua 22:10-34). During the later wars with the Canaanites, in the days of Deborah and Barak, the tribe of Reuben failed to answer the call to arms (Judges 5:15-16). Jacob’s prophecy concerning Reuben has continued to be fulfilled ever since. Never has Reuben excelled in anything. (The Genesis Record, page 652, Baker Book House)

Genesis 49:5-7 records Israel’s prophetic anti-blessings that he bestowed upon Simeon and Levi for the massacre of the city of Shechem.

Genesis 49:5

“Simeon and Levi are brothers; Their swords are implements of violence.”

“Simeon” (/w)um+v!) (*shim`on*) (shim-one) was the second child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “the Lord has heard” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:33.

“Levi” (ywl!@) (*lewi*) (lay-vee) was the third child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “My husband will be attached to me” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:34.

Israel’s statement “Simeon and Levi are brothers,” which in context does “not” emphasize their biological relationship of having the same father and mother but rather emphasizes that they were “confederates, allies, co-conspirators” or “partners in crime” in the massacre of the Shechemites.

The statement “Their swords are implements of violence” is a reference to the massacre of the Shechemites in retaliation for the rape of Dinah (See Genesis 34).

In Genesis 33:19, we read where Jacob purchased a tract of land from Hamor, the Hivite whose intention for selling this tract of land was to intermarry with Jacob’s family and absorbing their great wealth and possessions that they acquired in Paddan Aram (See Genesis 34:23). The Hivites were a branch of the Canaanites who were under a curse as stipulated in the prophecy of Noah, which is recorded in Genesis 9:24-27, thus Jacob’s family could not intermarry with Hamor’s people, the Hivites. Then, in Genesis 34:1-4, we saw Dinah raped by Shechem, the son of Hamor, the Hivite and Genesis 34:5-7 records Jacob’s “passive” response to the rape and the angry reaction of his sons.

In Genesis 34:8-12, we saw Hamor proposing intermarriage and an economic package to Jacob’s sons that would greatly benefit Jacob’s family. A comparison of Genesis 34:13-17 with Genesis 34:25 reveals that Simeon and Levi deceitfully proposed to Hamor that he and his constituents agree to the condition of circumcision with the intention of killing him, his son Shechem and all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

Genesis 34:25-29 records the murder of Shechem and his father Hamor as well as all the men of the city of Shechem by Jacob’s sons in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

The moral outrage and righteous indignation expressed by Jacob’s sons towards the rape of their sister was totally justified and appropriate but the manner in which they dealt with the rape of

their sister was not justified and totally inappropriate. They dishonored God by using circumcision as the means to immobilize Shechem and Hamor and their subjects so that they could be murdered. The very holiness that Jacob's sons honored by expressing anger over the rape of their sister Dinah, they dishonored by using circumcision to deceive the Shechemites and killing them without divine sanction.

Jacob and his sons should have done the following in dealing with this problem with the rape of Dinah. First of all, they should have immediately demanded that Dinah be returned to them before negotiations could take place.

Secondly, they should have flat out refused this proposal of intermarriage due to the fact that they were prohibited from intermarrying with Canaanites unless of course, Shechem accepted the Lord as His Savior and then submitted to the sign of the Abrahamic covenant, which is circumcision. Under the Mosaic Law in Israel, the rape of an unengaged or unmarried woman like Dinah did not require the death penalty but rather, it required fifty shekels of silver being paid to the victim's family as the bride-price and there would not be a possibility of divorce if the father of the victim agreed to marriage (See Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:25-29). However, in Jacob's day, the Mosaic Law was not yet given and furthermore, Dinah was not raped by an Israelite but rather by a Canaanite and the family of Jacob was prohibited from intermarrying Canaanites because of the prophecy of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27. Therefore, if Shechem did not become a believer and then submit to circumcision, then Jacob and his sons should have refused to give Dinah in marriage to him.

No military action would have been required but rather Jacob and his sons should have simply taken Dinah and then separated from the Canaanites as they should have done in the first place. If Shechem did not return Dinah, then that would have been considered an act of war, which would have called for military action in order to rescue her.

The fact that Dinah was raped by Shechem and that Simeon and Levi took Dinah from Shechem's house indicates that Dinah was held against her

will or in other words she was held hostage by Shechem even though he treated her well according to Genesis 34:3. Therefore, we can see that Shechem and his father Hamor had never offered honest negotiations with Simeon and Levi who felt that they were negotiating with a gun held to their heads.

The fact that Dinah was held hostage by Shechem indicates that Shechem and Hamor had attempted to impose their will on Jacob's family in the preceding negotiations, thus, the Shechemites brought down this violence upon themselves.

Jacob's sons were correct in opposing the mixing of the chosen seed with the seed of the Canaanites but wrong in adopting the means they selected to achieve their end, which demonstrates that they were "chips off the old block," Jacob since they too, like their father in his younger days, thought that the ends justified the means.

If Shechem did return Dinah, then Simeon and Levi should have done nothing to him and his father and the inhabitants of their city but rather should have waited for the Lord to deal with Shechem and Hamor in His perfect timing.

Romans 12:19, "Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, 'VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,' says the Lord."

The Shechemites were Hivites and Hivites were descendants of Canaan and so therefore, God would have in His perfect timing dealt with Shechem and his father for the rape of Dinah since they were Canaanites and under the curse of Noah recorded in Genesis 9:24-27 and would thus be judged by God later in history.

Although Simeon and Levi were justified in their anger due to the fact that their sister Dinah was not only raped but also was held hostage by Shechem, they were "not" justified in murdering innocent people, namely, the men of the city of Shechem since they had nothing to do with the rape and kidnapping of Dinah. They were also not justified in killing Shechem and his father Hamor since the Lord never sanctioned such a thing.

The actions of Simeon and Levi were totally unnecessary unlike Abraham's military action, which he took against the four Eastern

Mesopotamian Kings to rescue his nephew Lot. Military action was necessary and appropriate by Abraham to rescue Lot since Lot who was a citizen of Sodom was taken as a prisoner of war by the Four Eastern Mesopotamian Kings after they had defeated the Five Dead Sea Kings (See Genesis 14:1-16). The military action taken by Simeon and Levi was totally unnecessary and inappropriate because Dinah was not a prisoner of war but rather the object of a man's infatuation and love and affection (See Genesis 34:3, 19)!

The Lord would not have approved the plundering of Shechem, which was a Canaanite city and He would not have approved of the taking captive the women and children of the city since later on in Israel's history, the Lord prohibited Israel from plundering the Canaanites but rather everything had to be killed or destroyed (See Deuteronomy 20:16-18).

Further indicating that Simeon and Levi were out of the will of God is the inconsistency of their actions where they took the wives of the men of the city of Shechem as hostages when God prohibited marriage to Canaanite women!

Simeon and Levi considered this plunder as the spoils of war but this was totally unnecessary and inappropriate since Dinah was not a prisoner of war but rather the object of a man's infatuation and love and affection!

Genesis 49:6

“Let my soul not enter into their council; Let not my glory be united with their assembly; Because in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they lamed oxen.”

Israel's statement “Let my soul not enter into their council” means that he denies conspiring with Simeon and Levi in their secret plot to massacre the Shechemites.

His statement “Let not my glory be united with their assembly” means that he denies agreeing with their conspiracy to massacre the Shechemites.

Psalm 1:1, “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.”

The causal clause “Because in their anger they slew men” indicates that Simeon and Levi killed all the men of the city of Shechem because they were motivated by the emotion of anger rather than obedience to God.

The statement “in their self-will they lamed oxen” means that Simeon and Levi crippled oxen by severing the tendons of their hind legs without their father's and God's consent and independently of their father and God. Genesis 34 does not reveal that Simeon and Levi were cruel to animals.

Genesis 49:7

“Cursed be their anger, for it is fierce; And their wrath, for it is cruel. I will disperse them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”

Israel's statement “cursed be their anger for it is fierce” is a declaration of punishment upon Simeon and Levi since their actions against the Shechemites in response to the rape of Dinah was motivated by uncontrolled rage rather than obedience to God.

His statement “cursed be...their wrath for it is cruel” is a declaration of punishment upon Simeon and Levi since their anger in response to the rape of their sister Dinah expressed itself in violence as manifested in the murder of all the men of Shechem and it was cruel in that they hamstringed the oxen of the city.

The content of the curse is expressed in the prophecy “I will disperse them in Jacob and scatter them,” which signifies that the tribes of Simeon and Levi would lose power because they would be divided up and absorbed into the other ten tribes of Israel. This prophecy was fulfilled when Simeon's descendants were absorbed into the territory of Judah according to Joshua 19:1, 9.

Some of the descendants of Simeon were captured and dwelled in some of the territory of the Edomites and Amalekites, outside of Canaan according to 1 Chronicles 4:39-43. During the period when the nation of Israel's was a divided kingdom, many of the Simeonites left Israel to join up with the tribe of Judah according to 2 Chronicles 15:9. In his farewell address to Israel recorded in Deuteronomy 33, Moses passed over the Simeonites in his blessing of the Israelites.

This prophecy in Genesis 49:7 was fulfilled when Levi's descendants never received an inheritance of their own land and were apportioned forty-eight towns and pasturelands among the twelve tribes, including Ephraim and Manasseh according to Numbers 35:1-5 and Joshua 21:1-41.

Interestingly, the tribe of Levi redeemed itself and was chosen the priestly tribe in Israel by taking their stand with Moses against the idolatry of the Israelites at Sinai according to Exodus 32:26. The Levites manifested the violent nature of their progenitor by killing three thousand idolatrous, uncontrollable mob of Israelites, which was justified since it was sanctioned by God and was in obedience to Moses' command who was himself a member of the tribe of Levi.

Genesis 49:8-15 records Israel's prophetic blessings that he bestowed upon Judah, Zebulun and Issachar.

Genesis 49:8

“Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you.”

“Judah” (hd*Why+) (*y^ehudhah*) (yeh-hoo-daw) was the fourth child that Leah bore to Jacob and his name means, “I will praise the Lord” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 29:35.

Both King David and the Lord Jesus Christ descended from the tribe of Judah.

Hebrews 7:14, “For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah.”

In Genesis 37 we saw that in an attempt to save Joseph's life, Judah proposed to his brothers that they sell Joseph to the Midianites.

The fact that Judah proposed to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites rather than killing him along with the phrase “Judah departed from his brothers,” which is recorded in Genesis 38:1 is a clear indication that Judah did “not” agree with his brother's desire to kill Joseph and so he separates from them.

If you recall, in Genesis 37 we read that Reuben intervened and prevented his brothers from killing Joseph and proposed as an alternative to killing him with their bare hands that they throw him into

an empty cistern, letting him die of natural causes. This alternative was proposed by Reuben with the intention of saving Joseph when his brothers were not around. However, while Reuben left his brothers to check on their flocks and they ate a meal, during the meal the talk turned back to Joseph again and the idea of killing him resurfaced as implied by Judah's proposal to sell Joseph into slavery.

Genesis 37:25-28 records Judah proposing to his brothers the sale of Joseph to the Midianites in order to prevent the murder of Joseph by his brothers.

Judah's statement in Genesis 37:27, “Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh” reveals that he has a conscience in that he acknowledges and reminds his brothers that Joseph is their brother.

Judah, like Reuben, disguised his desire to prevent the murder of Joseph because he feared for his own life since Simeon and Levi had recently killed all the men of the city of Shechem in retaliation for the rape of their sister Dinah.

Even though Judah's proposal only substituted one evil for another since like murder, kidnapping was a capital offense (See Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 24:7), his rationale was that Joseph was better off alive than dead, even if it meant he would spend the rest of his life a slave. Like his brother Reuben, Judah was guilty of a lack of moral courage and self-sacrifice in that he was not willing to stand up to his brothers and sacrifice himself if need be, to prevent the murder of Joseph.

Then, in Genesis 38, we saw his great failure with Tamar where he left his brothers at Dothan, and spent time with a heathen named Hirah and married an unbelieving Canaanite and had three children with her, two of which were killed by the Lord for their involvement with evil. Judah failed to provide their widow Tamar his third son Shelah to carry on the line of the two deceased brothers because of his fear that he would die as well. This resulted in Tamar disguising herself as a temple prostitute and deceiving Judah to solicit her unknowingly, which resulted in her getting pregnant through him and she bore him twins,

Zerah and Perez, the latter was in the line of Christ.

In Genesis 44:18-34, we read where Judah appealed to Joseph to release Benjamin, offering himself in place of Benjamin so as to not break his father's heart. Judah's offer to be a substitute for Benjamin typifies the Lord Jesus who is our Substitute.

1 John 3:16, "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

The prediction "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" contains a play on words and is a paronomasia.

In the Hebrew text, there is a play on the proper noun *y^ehudhah* (yeh-hoo-daw) (hd*Why+), which means, "I will praise the Lord" and is translated "Judah" since "shall praise" is the verb *yadhah* (hd*y*) (yaw-daw) and "hand" is the noun *yadh* (dy*) (yawd).

A "paronomasia" is designed to get the readers attention and to emphasize the two or three words that are placed alongside of each other that are similar in sound and appearance. Here in Genesis 49:8, the nouns noun *y^ehudhah*, "Judah" and the verb *yadhah*, "shall praise" and the noun *yadh*, "hand" are similar and sound and appearance and are placed alongside of each other in order to emphasize the preeminence of Judah.

Israel's prediction "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" was fulfilled in Judah's lifetime by becoming the leader by virtue of his conduct during the process leading up to Joseph revealing his identity where he offered to sacrifice himself for the sake of Benjamin and their father.

1 Chronicles 5:1-2 speaks not only of the birthright being given to Joseph rather than Reuben because Reuben slept with his father's concubine but also that the rulership over the family went to Judah.

This statement "Judah, your brothers shall praise you" is also prophetic meaning that in the future, the descendants of Judah's brothers would recognize his descendants as the leader of their nation since God will achieve great victories through the descendants of Judah such as King

David and the Lord Jesus Christ. This prophecy was fulfilled in a "near" sense with David when the leaders of Israel anointed him king over the nation according to 2 Samuel 5:1-3 and will be fulfilled in a "far" sense during the millennial reign of Christ according to Ezekiel 37:22, Hosea 3:5 and Zechariah 12 and 14:1-17.

The prophecy "Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies" means that Judah's descendants would triumph over their enemies since seizing the fleeing enemy by the nape of the neck is a symbol of conquest (See 1 Samuel 18:7). This prophecy was fulfilled in a "near" sense under the reign of David as fully documented in 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings and it will also be fulfilled in a "far" sense when the Lord Jesus Christ will defeat antichrist and the Tribulational armies according to Isaiah 42:13, Zechariah 12 and 14, Revelation 19:11-21.

Israel's prediction "Your father's sons shall bow down to you" means that all the tribes of Israel will be under the authority of a member of the tribe of Judah, which was also fulfilled in a near sense with David and in a far sense with the Lord Jesus Christ during His millennial reign.

Genesis 49:9

"Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?"

"Lion's whelp" is composed of the noun *gur* (rWG) (goor), "young lion" and the noun *aryeh* (hy@r+a^) (a-ree), "mature lion" and so therefore, this expression literally reads, "a young lion of a mature lion." This expression does "not" refer to a young cub but rather a young lion that has finally mature and is able to capture prey for itself.

In the ancient world, the lion was a proverbial symbol of courage, strength and kingship because of its majestic appearance with its mane and swift, powerful movements and prowess as a fearless predator. The lion was used as a figure in Israel for the Messiah and was applied by the Holy Spirit to the Lord Jesus Christ who is called "the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah" in Revelation 5:5. Therefore, in Genesis 49:9, the phrase "Judah is a

lion's whelp" is a prediction meaning that the tribe of Judah would have a lion-like nature, which refers to its military prowess. This was fulfilled in a near sense when the tribe of Judah became the leader of the other tribes militarily (See Numbers 2:1-3; Judges 1:1-2; 3:9; 20:18) and it was fulfilled through the military successes of King David. In a far sense it will be fulfilled through the lion of Judah, the Lord Jesus Christ at His Second Advent when He will destroy Israel's enemies including antichrist and the Tribulational armies (See Revelation 19:11-21; Zechariah 12 and 14).

Israel's statement "From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, and as a lion, who dares rouse him up?" means that just like a lion inspires fear and respect because of her prowess in devouring prey so the tribe of Judah would inspire fear and respect because she conquers her enemies (See Numbers 24:9; cf. 23:24; Deuteronomy 33:20, 22; Nahum 2:11-12).

Genesis 49:10

"The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh comes, and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples."

The "scepter" in the ancient world was a symbol of authority, sovereignty and kingship (See Numbers 24:17) and "the ruler's staff" refers to the one who establishes laws and decrees.

The expression "from between his feet" is a reference to kings who were seated on their throne with a ruler staff between their feet.

"Until" is the preposition *`adh* (du^), which does "not" mean that the kingship in Israel will change from the tribe of Judah "until" the Messiah has arrived but rather indicates that kings would arise from the tribe of Judah right "up to" the arrival of the Messiah.

"Shiloh comes": (1) Conjunction *ki* (yK!) (kee), "when" (2) 3rd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *bo* (aOB) (3) "He comes" (4) Relative particle *`asher* (rv#a&) (asher), "which belongs" (5) Preposition *l'* (l+) (lamed), "to" (6) 3rd person masculine singular pronominal suffix, "him."

With the exception of the RSV and NIV, most English translations incorrectly translate the Hebrew expression hOyv! as "Shiloh" since the expression is almost identical to the spelling of the proper noun *Shiloh*, which is hOV!.

The proper noun *Shiloh* refers to a Canaanite city captured by the Israelites but in Genesis 49:10, the reference is to a person since the context is speaking of the rulership or kingship in Israel coming from the tribe of Judah.

"Peoples" is the noun *`am* (<u^), which is used to denote all the inhabitants of the earth.

The conjunction *ki* is used in a temporal sense meaning "when" referring to the moment the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ assumes the Davidic throne at His Second Advent to establish His millennial reign. Therefore, the preposition *`adh* when coupled with the conjunction *ki* means, "up to the moment when."

The relative particle *`asher* means "which belongs" referring to possession of the scepter and ruler's staff mentioned in the previous clause, which must be inserted into the translation in order for it to make sense in the English.

Corrected translation of Genesis 49:10, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor the ruler's staff from between his feet up to the moment when He (the Messiah) comes, which to him belongs the scepter and ruler's staff and to him the obedience of all the inhabitants of the earth."

In Genesis 49:10, Israel is prophesying that the kingship in Israel shall come out of the tribe of Judah and this will continue up to the time that the Messiah arrives. This prophecy has been fulfilled once the tribe of Judah under David assumed the leadership over the nation, the kingship in Israel has never departed from Judah up to time of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ's First Advent who will establish His millennial reign at His Second Advent.

The inhabitants of all the earth will be subjugated to the Lord Jesus Christ during His millennial reign since God the Father bestowed upon Him the rulership of the entire earth because He obeyed the Father's will in going to the Cross and dying for the sins of the entire world (See Philippians 2:5-

11; Ephesians 1:20-23; Colossians 1:18; Psalm 89:27; Zechariah 14:9).

Israel's prophecy in Genesis 49:10 is a reference to the "Davidic" covenant, which was an unconditional covenant and deals with the dynasty that will rule the nation of Israel as indicated in 2 Samuel 7:16 where God promised David that a descendant of his would sit on his throne forever.

The "Davidic" covenant is reconfirmed throughout the Old Testament (Psalm 89:24-27; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:14-17, 20-21; Ezekiel 37:24-25; Daniel 7:13-14; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11; Zechariah 14:4, 9) and the Lord Jesus Christ will literally fulfill this covenant during His millennial reign.

Genesis 49:11

"He ties his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, and his robes in the blood of grapes."

"Foal" is the noun *ayir* (ry!u^) (ah-yeer), which refers to a young, vigorous male donkey.

In the Hebrew text, "donkey's colt" literally reads, "the offspring of a female donkey" since it is composed of the noun *ben* (/B@) (bane), which means, "offspring" and the noun *athon* (/ota*) (aw-thone), which refers to a female donkey.

The statement "He ties his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine" is also prophetic in that it is reference to the Messiah during His millennial reign who will have power over creation and every creature as evidence in that when He ties his donkey to a vine, the donkey will not eat it since the animal will obey Him.

The vine is a common biblical figure of divine favor and prosperity and in Genesis 49:11, the "vine" is used prophetically illustrating the extraordinary prosperity that will take place during the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Israel's statement "He washes his garments in wine and his robes in the blood of grapes" refers to the extraordinary prosperity that the nation of Israel will experience during the millennial reign of Christ and signifies wine will be in such abundance at that time that it will be common as water used to wash clothes!

Genesis 49:12

"His eyes are dull from wine, and his teeth white from milk."

The statement "His eyes are dull from wine" should be translated "His eyes are sparkling from wine" since "dull" is the adjective *chakhlil* (lyllk+j^) (khak-leel) which means, "sparkling" and is a figure for wealth and prosperity.

In a literal sense, the statement "His eyes are sparkling from wine and his teeth white from milk" means that the Lord Jesus will have sparkling eyes and white teeth or in a figurative sense, He will be the ideal of beauty and health.

Genesis 49:13

"Zebulun will dwell at the seashore; And he shall be a haven for ships, and his flank shall be toward Sidon."

"Zebulun" (/l%Wbw+) (zeb-oo-loon) was the sixth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, "honor" and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:19-20.

In the Hebrew text, the statement "Zebulun will dwell at the seashore" literally reads, "Zebulun will dwell towards the shore of seas" since the Hebrew text contains the following: (1) Preposition *l'* (l+) (lamed), "towards" (2) Noun *choph* ([Oj] (khofe), "coast, shore" (3) Masculine plural noun *yam* (<y*) (yawm), "seas."

Notice that the Hebrew text says that the tribe of Zebulun will dwell "towards the shore of seas" which refers to the Mediterranean Sea and not "at the seashore." Therefore, we can see from the Hebrew text that the territory of the tribe of Zebulun would not border the Mediterranean Sea but would face "towards" the Mediterranean Sea.

The statement "His flank shall be toward Sidon" teaches that the northern border of Zebulun's territory will be towards Sidon. The tribe of Zebulun occupied inland territory and was blocked from the Mediterranean Sea by the tribe of Asher according to Joshua 19:10-16. However, her border was still only approximately 10 miles from the Mediterranean permitting her to enjoy access to the seafaring trade according to Deuteronomy 33:18-19.

The prophecy “he shall be a haven for ships” has never been fulfilled and will be during the millennial reign of Christ. The prophecy of Zechariah 14:8-10 reveals that the entire topography of Israel will be changed because of the great earthquake caused by the Lord Jesus Christ landing on the Mount of Olives at His Second Advent. This great earthquake will elevate Jerusalem whereas at the present time she is imbedded in the midst of mountainous rough terrain. Jerusalem, who throughout her history has been an inland city, will become a seagoing city, or port town at the 2nd Advent of Christ according to the prophecy that appears in Zechariah 14:8. Therefore, the prophecy “he shall be a haven for ships” will be fulfilled at that time.

Genesis 49:14

“Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the sheepfolds.”

“Issachar” (rk*cc*y!) (yis-saw-kawr) was the fifth child that Leah bore Jacob and his name means, “reward” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:16-18.

“Sheepfolds” is the noun *mishp^ethayim* (<y!t^P+v+m!) (mish-paw-thay-eem), which does “not” refer to sheepfolds but rather denotes two saddle-baskets of a pack mule.

Israel’s prophecy “Issachar is a strong donkey, lying down between the saddlebags” means that although the tribe of Issachar was strong, they were lazy and docile, stubbornly refusing work and preferring comfort.

Genesis 49:15

“When he saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant, he bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a slave at forced labor.”

The statement “When he saw that a resting place was good and that the land was pleasant” was fulfilled since the territory of Issachar was in the fertile plateau of lower Galilee, which was the best farming land in Israel (See Joshua 19:17-24).

The prophecy “he bowed his shoulder to bear burdens, and became a slave at forced labor” was fulfilled when the tribe of Issachar submitted to the Canaanites rather than exterminate them as

they were commanded by God to do or subjugate them as the rest of the tribes did.

Zebulun is mentioned before Issachar even though Issachar was the fifth child of Jacob and Leah and Zebulun the sixth since the tribe of Issachar would be lazy and submissive to the enemy.

Genesis 49:16-21 records the patriarch pronouncing prophetic blessings upon the sons of Zilpah and Bilhah as well as praying to God for deliverance. In Genesis 49:3-15, Israel bestowed prophetic blessings and antiblessings upon the sons of Leah but now in Genesis 49:16-21, we see him bestowing prophetic blessings upon the sons of his concubines, Bilhah and Zilpah.

“Concubine” is the noun *pileghesh* (vg#!#P!) (pee-leh-glesh) which refers to the fact that Bilhah and Zilpah were second-class wives, acquired without payment of bride-money and possessing fewer legal rights (see Genesis 30:4; Judges 19:1-4).

The people in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob’s culture regarded a concubine as a secondary wife with some, but not all, of the rights and privileges of the primary wife. In the Old Testament period, a concubine was a legal wife but one of secondary rank and she could be divorced with a small gift. Therefore, the children of a concubine did not have the same legal rights as the wife and so the inheritance would go to the child of the wife rather than the concubine.

Having a concubine was often a sign of wealth and was recognized as a status symbol. The following men had concubines: (1) Nahor (Gen. 22:24) (2) Abraham (Gen. 25:6) (3) Jacob (Gen. 35:22) (4) Eliphaz (Gen. 36:12) (5) Saul (2 Sam. 3:7) (6) David (2 Sam. 5:13; 15:16; 16:21) Solomon (1 Kings 11:3).

As we saw in our study of Abraham, Sarah and Hagar in Genesis 16, men and their wives sought concubines when the wife could not bear children. In these situations, wives presented their maidservants to their own husbands.

As Genesis 22:24 records, children of a concubine were not viewed as illegitimate but were considered part of the family.

Genesis 49:16

“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel.”

“Dan” is the proper noun *dan* (dawn) (/D*) and was the first child that Bilhah bore Jacob and his name means, “God has vindicated me” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:5-6.

Rachel named Bilhah’s first child with Jacob “Dan” since she did not consider the birth of Dan merely as a blessing from the Lord but rather as the justice due her as a hopeless victim, which was in response to the fact that Rachel was barren and Leah was not. Therefore, by naming Bilhah’s child as “Dan” Rachel was saying that God was vindicating her in the sense that He was defending her cause against Leah, which of course, was not the case.

The blessing of Dan consists of a play on his name since his name is derived from the verb *din* (/yD!) (deen), which means, “to vindicate.” Therefore, Israel is predicting that Dan, whose name means, “vindicate,” is going to vindicate his people as one of the tribes of Israel.

The statement “Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel” means that even though Dan was a child of a concubine, his descendants like the descendants of Jacob’s primary wives, Rachel and Leah would vindicate the nation of Israel or in other words defend the nation’s cause. Therefore, this statement reveals that the tribe of Dan will be on equal footing with the tribes, which descend from the sons of Jacob’s primary wives, Rachel and Leah.

The fact that the tribe of Dan will be on equal footing with the tribes, which descend from the sons of Rachel and Leah is indicated by the use of the phrase “as one of the tribes of Israel.” This phrase “as one of the tribes of Israel” seems redundant since Dan is one of Israel’s sons. However, its use makes perfect sense when we understand that Israel is prophesying that even though the tribe of Dan descended from a concubine, it would be equal to the tribes descending from the sons of Rachel and Leah.

Genesis 49:17

“Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path, that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward.”

The statement “Dan shall be a serpent in the way” is inaccurate and should be translated “May Dan be a serpent in the way.”

The reason for this translation is that “shall be” is the qal “jussive” form of the verb *hayah* (hy*h*) (haw-yaw).

The imperfect has 2 usages: (1) Cohortative: Expresses the speaker’s desire or intention to act. (2) Jussive: Expresses a desire for action from a 3rd person subject. In Genesis 49:17, we have the “jussive” form of the verb *hayah* expressing Israel’s Spirit inspired desire for action from the descendants of Dan. Therefore, Israel’s statement about Dan in Genesis 49:17 is a desire by the Holy Spirit for the descendants of his son Dan, thus, refuting any interpretation that this statement is about his descendants’ involvement with evil as symbolized by the serpent. However, the tribe of Dan did introduce idolatry into the land of Israel on a regular basis according to Judges 18:30-31.

Also, a son of Shelomith of the tribe of Dan was guilty of blaspheming the name of the Lord according to Leviticus 24:11. It was also in Dan that Jeroboam who led a rebellion that ended in the divided kingdom, set up one of his two golden calves according to 1 Kings 12:28-30.

Furthermore, it is interesting that the tribe of Dan is not listed among the twelve tribes of Israel during the Tribulation period according to Revelation 7:1-8. However, in Genesis 49:17, Israel is praying that the descendants of Dan will be a serpent on the road, a horned snake on the path, one who bites the heels of a horse so that the rider falls backward.

Israel is praying that even though Dan would be a small tribe in Israel, like a snake she would be aggressive, dangerous and strike unexpectedly to overthrow nations. This was fulfilled during the history of the nation of Israel according to Judges 18. In fact, Samson, who was from the tribe of Dan, single-handedly defeated the Philistines according to Judges 14-16.

Genesis 49:18

“For Your salvation I wait, O LORD.”

Suddenly, Israel interrupts his prophetic blessings on his sons and their descendants by proclaiming

that he waited with expectation for the Lord's salvation or deliverance. Up to this point in our study of these prophetic blessings that Israel bestowed upon his sons, we have seen that Judah is pictured as a lion, which refers to the military prowess of the tribe of Judah and also Dan is depicted as a horned snake. However, the nation of Israel would not depend upon the strength of these two tribes to deliver them from their adversaries but rather they were to depend upon the Lord to deliver them, thus Israel proclaims that the deliverance of the nation from its enemies must come from the Lord. Therefore, the patriarch inserts this petition to God because his prophecies predict opposition to the twelve tribes that would descend from him.

Israel's prayer for deliverance from the Lord expresses Israel's dependence upon God's power and not human power of his sons or their descendants to deliver the nation from its enemies.

Psalms 44:4-8, "You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob. Through You we will push back our adversaries; Through Your name we will trample down those who rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, nor will my sword save me. But You have saved us from our adversaries, and You have put to shame those who hate us. In God we have boasted all day long, and we will give thanks to Your name forever. Selah."

Israel's prayer would therefore be a reminder to his sons and their descendants to not depend upon their own human power or military might to defeat their enemies but to depend upon the power of the Lord to do so.

1 Samuel 17:46-47, "This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands."

"Salvation" is the noun *y^oshu`ah* (hu*Wvy+) (yesh-oo-aw), which does "not" refer to salvation or deliverance in a spiritual sense but rather the context indicates that it refers to "deliverance" from one's enemies in the natural realm. This is indicated in that Israel's prayer in Genesis 49:18 is within the context of his prophecy regarding each of the twelve tribes and the part that each would play in the future with regards to the nation's enemies.

"Lord" is the proper noun *Yahweh* (hw*hy+), which is the covenant name of God thus signifying that Israel had a covenant relationship with God.

Also, the term *Yahweh*, "Lord" emphasizes the "immanency" of God meaning that Israel was petitioning that God would involve Himself in and concern Himself with and intervene on behalf of the nation that would descend from his sons.

"I wait" is the verb *qawah* (hw*q*) (kaw-vaw), which is used in the piel (intensive) stem and means, "to wait eagerly, confidently, expectantly and patiently" for deliverance from the Lord.

Micah 7:7, "But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation."

Psalms 40:1, "I waited patiently for the LORD; And He inclined to me and heard my cry."

Psalms 62:5-8, "My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah."

This prayer in Genesis 49:18 was answered at times throughout Israel's history during the period of the Judges and David but ultimately it will be answered at the "Second Advent" of Jesus Christ.

The "Second Advent" is the visible return of Christ to planet earth with the elect angels and the Church in order to save the nation of Israel from her enemies and end the Tribulation dispensation and establish our Lord's 1000-year millennial reign (Daniel 2:44-45; Zechariah. 14; Matthew 24:29-31; Revelation 19:11-21). The Lord and His

armies will orbit the earth before landing on the Mount of Olives, which was the site of His Ascension (Acts. 1:9-11) and there will be a great earthquake when our Lord's foot touches the Mount of Olives (Zech. 14:1-8) and it will be a unique day having neither day nor night (Zech. 14:7). Therefore, Israel's prayer for the Lord to deliver the nation that would descend from him recorded in Genesis 49:18 was prophetic in nature.

Genesis 49:19

“As for Gad, raiders shall raid him, but he will raid at their heels.”

“Gad” (dG*) (gawd) was the first boy that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis 30:9-11 and his name comes from “What good fortune” indicating that Leah attributed this child to fortune or good luck rather than God and his birth. This prophecy predicts that the tribe of Gad will have a troubled existence but will retaliate against its enemies.

Throughout, its history, the tribe of Gad was attacked by the Ammonites according to Judges 10-12 and Jeremiah 49:1-6. She was also attacked by the Moabites and Arameans according to 1 Kings 22:3 and 2 Kings 10:32-33 and the Assyrians according to 2 Kings 15:29. Gad fought back after each defeat and her people were considered great fighters by the other tribes of Israel according to Deuteronomy 33:20 and 1 Chronicles 5:18 and 12:8.

The statement “he will raid at their heels” means that the tribe of Gad would only engage in guerilla warfare because she would not be big enough to engage in a full scale war with her enemies.

Genesis 49:20

“As for Asher, his food shall be rich, and he will yield royal dainties.”

“Asher” (rv^a*) (aw-share) is the second son that Zilpah bore to Jacob, whose birth is recorded in Genesis 30:12-13 and his name means “women will call me happy” meaning that Leah thought she would be envied by other women because of this child.

The statement “his food shall be rich” is a reference to the fertile territory of the tribe of Asher, which was strip of land running north from

the Carmel range according to Joshua 19:24-31 and Deuteronomy 33:24-25. The tribe of Asher lived alongside the Canaanites and Phoenicians and traded with them according to Judges 1:32 and Ezekiel 27:17.

The statement “he will yield royal dainties” in the Hebrew text literally reads, “He will produce royal delicacies,” which refers to the tribe of Asher supplying foreign courts with great food products because of the fertile region in which she settled.

Genesis 49:21

“Naphtali is a doe let loose, he gives beautiful words.”

“Naphtali” (y|T*pn^) (naf-taw-lee) was the second child that Bilhah bore to Jacob and his name means, “my wrestling” reflecting Rachel's attitude in which she viewed her relationship with her sister Leah to be like a wrestling match and his birth is recorded in Genesis 30:7-8.

“Doe” is the noun `ayyalah (hl*y*a^) (ah-yaw-law), which refers to an adult female deer.

“Beautiful words” is composed of the noun `emer (rm#a@) (ay-mer), which means, “fawn” and the noun *shepher* (rp#v#) (sheh-fer), which means, “lovely.” Therefore, the Hebrew text of Genesis 49:21 literally reads, “Naphtali is a doe let loose, which produces lovely fawns.” This prophecy refers to the freedom and frequent movements of the tribe of Naphtali according to Deuteronomy 33:23, Judges 4:6, 10 and 5:18.

Israel's prophetic blessings on Rachel's sons are recorded in Genesis 49:22-27 and the narrator's conclusion appears in Genesis 49:28.

Genesis 49:22

“Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a spring; Its branches run over a wall.”

“Joseph” was the eleventh son of Jacob born in Paddan Aram and he was the first child that Rachel bore to Jacob according to Genesis 30:22-24.

The name “Joseph” refers to his sons “Ephraim” and “Manasseh” whom Israel adopted giving them equal status with their uncles as progenitors of the tribes that will bear their names and inheritors of the land of Canaan (See Genesis 48:1-20).

The use of the name “Joseph” for the tribes of “Manasseh” and “Ephraim” is also used in Numbers and Joshua.

“Fruitful bough” is composed of the noun *ben* (/B@) (bane), which means, “son” and the verb *parah* (hr*P*) (paw-raw), which means, “to produce fruit.” Therefore, the Hebrew text literally reads, “Joseph is a son who produces fruit,” which is a metaphor for fertility and a play on the name of his second son “Ephraim” whose name means, “He (God) has made me fruitful.”

The term *ben*, “son” is used in a metaphoric sense for a vine and the verb *parah*, “who produces fruit” is used substantively to describe that this vine produces fruit abundantly.

In the statement “Joseph is a son who produces fruit” Israel is comparing the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of his son Joseph to a vine that produces fruit abundantly, which metaphorically means that Ephraim and Manasseh’s descendants would produce offspring in great numbers. Therefore, we can translate the term *ben*, “son” with this figure in mind as “vine.”

Israel further describes the fertility of Joseph’s sons and in particular Ephraim by describing him as a vine “by a spring” which refers to the vine having access to an abundant water supply that enables it to be fertile.

The statement “Its branches run over a wall” is composed of the following in the Hebrew text: (1) Noun *bath* (tB^) (bath), which means, “daughter” (2) Verb *tsa`adh* (du^x*) (tsaw-ad), which means, “to climb over” (3) Preposition *`al* (lu^) (al), which means, “over” (4) Noun *shur* (rWv) (shoor), “which means, “wall.”

Therefore, the Hebrew text literally reads, “with daughters that climb over a wall,” which is a metaphor for the expansion of the territory of Joseph’s descendants (See Joshua 17:14-18).

The term *bath*, “daughters” is used in a metaphoric sense for the branches of a vine that climb over a wall.

Genesis 49:22 could be translated literally as follows, “Joseph is a son who produces fruit by a spring with daughters that climb over a wall” or it can be translated figuratively as “Joseph is a vine

which produces fruit by a spring with branches that climb over a wall.”

In Genesis 49:22, Israel is using figurative language comparing his favorite son Joseph and in particular Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh to a vine, which produces fruit abundantly, with an abundant water supply and branches that climb over a wall. In figurative terms, he is predicting that Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh would be strong and numerous, producing offspring in great numbers. This prophecy was fulfilled according to a comparison of two censuses taken during the course of Israel’s wandering in the desert under Moses prior to entering Canaan under Joshua.

The combined number of males in Ephraim and Manasseh increased from 72,700 (See Numbers 1:32-35) in the second year after the Exodus to 85,200 forty years later (See Numbers 26:28-37) while in contrast, the combined populations of Reuben and Simeon during the same period decreases from 105,800 to 65,930. In his farewell address, Moses in Deuteronomy 33:17 refers to the “myriads of Ephraim” and the “thousands of Manasseh.”

Genesis 49:23

“The archers bitterly attacked him, and shot at him and harassed him.”

This passage refers to opposition that Joseph faced throughout his life from his brothers, Potiphar’s wife and Pharaoh’s cupbearer, which we have noted in detail in our studies of Genesis 37-40.

Genesis 49:24, “But his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel).”

The statement “his bow remained firm and his arms were agile from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob” means that during the years of adversity that Joseph endured, he maintained a dynamic mental attitude with love, joy, peace and no bitterness and resentment because he was empowered by the Word of God (See Hebrews 4:12).

The Word of God provided Joseph the power or capacity to handle the adversity in his life because

he trusted that God would fulfill His Word to him in the form of the two prophetic dreams that are recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

The title “the Mighty One” is a reference to God with emphasis upon His omnipotence and the name “Jacob” signifies the patriarch’s weakness and dependence upon God’s power and provision and protection. Therefore, the title “the Mighty One of Jacob” means that the omnipotence of God was manifested in Joseph’s human weakness and impotence when he appropriated the omnipotence of God by having faith in the promises of God.

Therefore, the statement “But his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob” indicates that Joseph lived according to the spiritual principle taught by the apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:9 that God’s power is manifested in human weakness or impotence.

Since Joseph trusted the Word of God, he was able to transcend his tremendous adversity and injustice directed towards him and so he would agree with what Paul said in Philippians 4:12. Like Paul, the Word of God, which is alive and powerful, gave Joseph the power or capacity to be able to persevere and endure and not fall victim to self-pity and bitterness and disillusionment.

God is also referred to as a “Shepherd” emphasizing that God protected and nourished Joseph during his years of adversity. The figure of God as a Shepherd of His people is used throughout the Scriptures (See Psalm 23:1-3; John 10:11; Hebrews 13:20-21).

Genesis 49:24

“But his bow remained firm, and his arms were agile, from the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob (From there is the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel).”

God is also referred to by Israel as the “Stone of Israel,” which the Hebrew literally reads, “the Rock of Israel,” which refers to the power and strength and firm foundation that God provided for the soul of Joseph during his times of adversity. This figure is used of the Lord Jesus Christ elsewhere in Scripture (See Psalm 118:22-23; Isaiah 28:16; Mark 12:10-11).

The name “Israel” means, “one who fights and overcomes with the power of God” and reflects strength and character produced by appropriating the power of the Word of God by claiming the promises of God in prayer. Therefore, the title “the Rock of Israel” means that Joseph overcame his adversities by appropriating the omnipotence of the Word of God by having faith in the promises of God.

Genesis 49:25

“From the God of your father who helps you, and by the Almighty who blesses you with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lies beneath, blessings of the breasts and of the womb.”

The phrase “the God of your father” would assure Joseph and his descendants that the same God who delivered Jacob from Esau, Laban, and famine and all his adversities would deliver him and his descendants.

Commenting on this expression, Nahum Sarna writes, “The title stresses the continuity of the generations, the unbroken chain of religious tradition that alone makes the dying patriarch’s blessing meaningful and effective.” (JPS Torah Commentary, page 344, Jewish Publication Society).

“God” is not the usual *Elohim* but rather the singular form of the noun, which is *El* (la@) in order to express the uniqueness of the God of Jacob.

“Almighty” is the noun *shadday* (yD^v^) (shad-dah-ee), which denotes God’s ability or power to provide Joseph and his descendants with various blessings.

“Bless” is the verb *barakh* (Er^B^), which means, “to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity, longevity, etc.” and so this verb indicates that God endued Joseph and his descendants with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (offspring in great numbers) and longevity.

“Blessings” is the noun *b^rakhah* (hk^r^B+) (ber-aw-kaw), which refers to various temporal gifts from God.

The expression “the blessings of heaven above” refers to fertility of land because of an abundant water supply from the earth’s atmosphere and “blessings of the deep that lies beneath” refers to fertility of land due to an abundant water supply underneath the earth. Therefore, this expression predicts that the territory in which the descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim would settle would be extremely fertile.

The expression “blessings of the breasts and of the womb” refers to the fertility of the human body (See Numbers 6:24-26; Deuteronomy 33:15; Hosea 12:8). Therefore, this expression predicts that the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim would have fertility of the body meaning abundant offspring. These blessings were fulfilled to a certain extent during the history of Joseph’s descendants and will find their ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ.

Genesis 49:26

“The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills; May they be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of the one distinguished among his brothers.”

Israel’s statement “The blessings of your father have surpassed the blessings of my ancestors up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills” is an acknowledgement that God has blessed him more than his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac. In relation to children, God had blessed Jacob more than Abraham and Isaac in the sense that Abraham had one child through Sarah, Isaac and he had through Hagar, Ishmael and six sons through Keturah whereas Isaac had only Jacob and Esau but Jacob had twelve children. Jacob’s descendants numbered seventy when he came to Egypt from Canaan. Therefore, in terms of posterity, God blessed Jacob more than his grandfather Abraham and his father Isaac.

The green mountain tops of Carmel and Hermon in the land of Canaan were an image of God given life and prosperity.

The phrase “May they be on the head of Joseph” is incorrectly translated but rather should be rendered “they (the blessings) will be on the head of

Joseph” since we do not have the “jussive” form of the verb *hayah*, which would express Israel’s desire for action from God upon his son Joseph and his descendants. Therefore, Israel is not praying for these blessings to come upon Joseph descendants but that they will and is thus prophetic and not a petition.

The expression “the one distinguished among his brothers” refers to the preeminence of Joseph in that he was superior to his brothers in both character and spirituality as well as his position in life as the prime minister of Egypt. This expression also means that Joseph was elected by God to perform a special service for Him as the prime minister of Egypt in order to deliver not only his family from famine as well as the nation of Egypt but also the entire world.

Genesis 49:27

“Benjamin is a ravenous wolf; In the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil.”

“Benjamin” was the last child that Rachel bore to Jacob and his name means, “son of my right hand” and his birth is recorded in Genesis 35:16-18.

Israel’s prophecy concerning the descendants of Benjamin refers to the successful military victories that they would achieve in the future (See Judges 3:15-30; 5:14; 20:14-21; 1 Samuel 9:1; 13:3; 1 Chronicles 8:40; 12:2-27, 29; Esther 2:5; Romans 11:1).

The statement “he divides the spoil” predicts that the tribe of Benjamin will share its military victories with the other tribes of Israel.

Genesis 49:28

“All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them. He blessed them, every one with the blessing appropriate to him.”

“All these” is a reference of course to Israel’s twelve sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

The statement “this is what their father said to them when he blessed them” is a reference to the prophetic blessings that Israel pronounced upon

his twelve sons who would be the progenitors of the twelve tribes of Israel, which are recorded in Genesis 49:3-27. This is the first Biblical reference to the twelve tribe of Israel.

The twelve tribes would include, Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Manasseh and Ephraim. Levi is excluded because he did not receive land but was the priesthood of the nation whereas Joseph is not included since his sons Manasseh and Ephraim were adopted by his father who in turn received and split Joseph's double portion as the recipient of the birthright (See Joshua 14:4; 1 Chronicles 5:1-2; Genesis 48; Numbers 1:10, 47).

The number twelve in the Bible denotes "governmental perfection." The twelve tribes descending from Israel (See Genesis 35:23-26) correspond in number to the twelve tribes of Nahor (see Genesis 22:20-24), of Ishmael (See Genesis 25:12-18), and of Edom (see Genesis 36:10-14).

We will complete our study of Genesis 49 by noting verses 29-33 and note Jacob's burial instructions and death.

Genesis 49:29-30

"Then he charged them and said to them, 'I am about to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field from Ephron the Hittite for a burial site.'"

In Genesis 47:27-31, we saw Israel requesting that Joseph bury him in Canaan and now here in Genesis 49:29-30 he makes this request of all his sons.

Israel's request to be buried in the land of Canaan is repeated for the third time (1st time: Genesis 47:27-31; 2nd time: Genesis 48:21-22; 3rd time: Genesis 49:29-30) and expresses his faith in God's promises that Canaan would be the home of the Israelites by requesting burial in the Cave of Machpelah.

The expression gathered to my people" is always used with reference to believers (Abraham in

Genesis 25:8; Ishmael in Genesis 25:17; Isaac in Genesis 35:29; Jacob in Genesis 49:33; Aaron in Numbers 20:24, 26; Deuteronomy 35:20). It does "not" refer to Israel's death and burial because he was not buried with his ancestors but rather it refers to his life after death with those who before him died in faith such as Adam, Eve, Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and his father Isaac.

Prior to the ascension of Jesus Christ, which is recorded in Acts 1:9-11, Old Testament saints when they died went to a compartment of Hades, which the Lord Jesus Christ referred to as "Abraham's bosom" in Luke 16 and called "Paradise" when He spoke to the thief on the Cross.

"Paradise" or "Abraham's bosom" is known as "Sheol" in the Old Testament and "Hades" in the New Testament and the Scriptures reveals that it contains four compartments: (1) Paradise: the place of the departed souls of believers before the resurrection of Christ (Lk. 23:39-43; Eph. 4:8-9) who were transferred to heaven after the resurrection and ascension of Christ (Eph. 4:10). (2) Torments: the temporary fire for the souls of unbelievers from all dispensations (Lk. 16:19-31) who will be transferred to the Great White Throne Judgment that concludes human history and from there will be cast in the Lake of Fire forever (Rev. 20:11-15). (3) Tartarus: the abode of the fallen angels of Genesis 6 who had sex with women in order to corrupt the human race and prevent the incarnation of the Son of God (1 Peter 3:18-22; 2 Peter 4; Jude 6). (4) The Abyss: the place of imprisonment for the demons who violated certain rules for angelic creation and will be released during the Tribulation (Lk. 8:30-31; Rom. 10:7; Rev. 20:1-3).

Prior to the resurrection, ascension and session of the Lord Jesus Christ, Old Testament saints when they died did not go to the third heaven but rather to Paradise. These Old Testament saints such as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ascended with Jesus Christ into heaven as part of our Lord's triumphal procession as victor in the angelic conflict and were part of the booty from our Lord's victory that was accomplished through His death and resurrection.

Ephesians 4:8, "Therefore it says, 'WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN.'"

"He led host a host of captives" refers to Old Testament saints that were temporarily residing in the second compartment of Hades called Paradise (Lk. 16; 23:43).

Israel states to his sons that the cave of Machpelah was purchased from a man named "Ephron the Hittite."

"Ephron" was the son of Zohar and was among the crowd of Hittites who had come to the gate of the city where Abraham negotiated the purchase of the burial plot with the Hittites and was an outstanding individual among these people.

The Hittites were present in the land of Canaan during the time of Abraham according to Genesis 15:19-21. They reached the zenith of their power sometime later and still possessed great power at the time of Solomon a thousand years later according to 2 Chronicles 1:17.

The Hittites served as witnesses to the sale of the cave of Machpelah to Abraham. Genesis 23 records that for four hundred shekels of silver, Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite "the cave of Machpelah" as a burial plot for Sarah, himself and his descendants.

The name "Machpelah" means, "double" or "split cave." "Machpelah" is located west of modern Hebron on the outskirts and the city is situated on the eastern slope of a narrow valley, which runs north and south and is surrounded by rocky hills.

"Hebron" was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

Israel states that the cave of Machpelah was "before Mamre, in the land of Canaan."

"Mamre" was located in "Hebron" as indicated by the phrase "that is, Hebron" in Genesis 23:19 and received its name from its owner, Mamre, who was a chief of the Amorites who sought security in an alliance with Abram and was blessed because of Abram (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24).

The "oaks of Mamre" evidently were a grove of terebinth trees that was owned by Mamre, which was the location of Abram's encampment when he came up from Egypt according to Genesis 13:18, 14:13 and 18:1.

By buying the land for his dead, Abraham was forced to realize that God's promises do not end with this life. God will do far more than He has done in this life, which is the confident expectation of all who die trusting in the Lord. In this life, the patriarchs such as Abraham and Sarah were sojourners but in death they were heirs of the promise and occupied the land. The patriarchs died not receiving the promises and yet they died in faith (see Hebrews 11:39-40).

Abraham bought this gravesite in the land of Canaan in the confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise to give the land of Canaan to himself and his descendants as a permanent possession. He died trusting that God would fulfill His promise and so we too must die in faith. As Abraham had a confident expectation of God fulfilling His promise in the future for him and his descendants, so believers today are to be confidently expecting God to fulfill His promises of a resurrection body and rewards for faithfulness.

Our natural inclination is to mourn death as the world does but in reality death should be the time of a believer's greatest demonstration of faith because the recipient of God's promises has a hope and a glorious future beyond the grave.

Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself referred to Abraham when discussing the resurrection with the Sadducees (see Matthew 22:31-32) and stated that God's promises demand resurrection.

Not only was Sarah buried at this site but so also were Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob and Leah were buried there as well (See Genesis 25:9; 35:27, 29, 49:31; 50:13) and all of these demonstrated their faith in God's promises by being buried with Sarah. This little piece of land gives promise of the whole land and makes clear that Abraham and Sarah were aliens and strangers seeking a homeland, which they will receive at the resurrection of Old Testament believers. With this purchase of land in Hebron facing Mamre, Abraham wanted his descendants to know that he

had believed in the Lord's promises. The presence of the grave site among his descendants in later years would be mute but eloquent testimony to them all that Abraham was sure that God would fulfill His promises.

Genesis 49:31-32

“There they buried Abraham and his wife Sarah, there they buried Isaac and his wife Rebekah, and there I buried Leah, the field and the cave that is in it, purchased from the sons of Heth.”

Notice that Leah and not Rachel was buried alongside Jacob in the cave of Machpelah along with Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebekah indicating that Leah and not Rachel was Jacob's right woman in the eyes of God.

The Word of God indicates that Leah and not Rachel was Jacob's right woman as indicating by the following. First of all, when we take into consideration the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God, we must acknowledge that, in spite of the deceptiveness of Laban, Leah was Jacob's wife.

Furthermore, it was Leah, not Rachel, who became the mother of Judah, who was to be the heir through whom the Messiah would come (cf. 49:8-12) and it was Levi, a son of Leah, who provided the priestly line in later years.

It seems noteworthy that both Leah and her handmaid had at least twice the number of children as compared to Rachel and her maid (cf. 29:31-30:24; 46:15, 18, 22, 25).

Also, the superiority of Leah to Rachel is also revealed in that Rachel died at an early age, yet she was the younger sister and when she died, she was buried on the way to Bethlehem (35:19) and yet when Leah died later, she was buried with Jacob in the cave at Machpelah (49:31).

Another thing to consider is that the Word of God reveals that Jacob chose Rachel based solely upon looks and did not take into consideration her character as Abraham's servant Eliezer did when selecting Rebekah for Isaac.

Lastly, when choosing Rachel, Jacob never prays for guidance from the Lord in order to discern if

Rachel was his right woman as Abraham's servant Eliezer did when choosing Rebekah and neither did he test the character of Rachel as Eliezer did with Rebekah!

“The sons of Heth” is another term for “Hittite” and were descendants of Heth who was the son of Canaan (See Genesis 10:15), who were in possession of Hebron that Abraham was residing in at the time.

Genesis 49:33

“When Jacob finished charging his sons, he drew his feet into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.”

The fact that Jacob “drew his feet into his bed” indicates not only that he had been sitting on the side of his bed when he pronounced the prophetic blessings upon his sons and their descendants but also that he was in full possession of his faculties at the moment of physical death.

“Breathed his last” is the verb *gawa* (UW^G*) (gaw-vaw), which pictures the act of drawing one's last breath.

Israel was 147 years of age when he died according to Genesis 47:28. Israel's death like the death of every human being is the sovereign decision of God based upon the integrity of God and omniscient knowledge of all the facts.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-2, “There is an appointed time for everything, a time for everything under heaven. There is a time to be born and there is a time to die.”

Psalms 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.”

Ecclesiastes 7:1b, “The day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth.”

The death of a member of the human race is not ruled by chance or fate but according to the providence of God, which expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God.

“Physical” death is the separation of the human soul (and in the case of the believer, the human spirit also) from the body (Matt. 8:22; Rom. 8:38-39; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; Phil. 1:20-21; 2:27, 30).

At physical death, the unbeliever's soul is separated from his physical body and goes to Torments, a compartment of Hades (Luke 16:19-31).

The unbeliever's physical body goes to the grave but is raised up at the Great White Throne Judgment (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:11-15) and their ultimate destiny is the Lake of Fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:12-15).

The believer's physical body goes to the grave at physical death and his soul and human spirit go to be face to face with the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8). The believer will receive a resurrection body at the resurrection of the church, which is called by theologians, the "rapture" of the church (See 1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17) whereas Old Testament saints like Jacob will receive their resurrection bodies at the Second Advent of Christ (See Ezekiel 37).

Jesus Christ's death on the Cross has freed us from the fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15, "Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives."

Physical death cannot separate the believer from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

The Lord promises to wipe away every tear from our eyes caused by the death of loved ones.

Isaiah 25:8, "He will swallow up death for all time, and the Lord GOD will wipe tears away from all faces, and He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken."

Life hangs by a very fine thread that can be snapped at any moment, which should motivate the believer to use the remainder of his time on earth to execute God's plan for his life to become like Christ.

Romans 14:8, "For if we live, we live because of the Lord and if we die, we die because of

the Lord therefore whether we live or whether we die, we belong to the Lord."

Genesis 50

We come now to the fiftieth and final chapter of the book of Genesis. The chapter is divided into three sections: (1) Joseph buries Jacob in the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 50:1-14). (2) Joseph assures his brothers that he won't seek revenge upon them (Genesis 50:15-21). (3) Conclusion of Joseph's life, his last words and death (Genesis 50:22-26).

The first section, which is divided into four parts: (1) Joseph grieves for his father (Genesis 50:1). (2) Jacob is embalmed and mourned (Genesis 50:2-3). (3) Pharaoh grants Joseph permission to bury his father in Canaan (Genesis 50:4-6). (4) Jacob is buried at the cave of Machpelah (Genesis 50:7-14).

Genesis 50:1

"Then Joseph fell on his father's face, and wept over him and kissed him."

"Wept" is the verb *bakhah* (חכ*B*) (baw-kaw), which refers to audible weeping. The verb refers to Joseph's emotional grief in mourning over the death of his father Israel.

In general, Orientals such as Joseph did not weep quietly but were inclined to loud weeping and lamenting. Weeping is an emotion and emotion composes one fifth of the human soul with the other elements of the soul being the volition, self-consciousness, mentality and conscience. Emotion is the responder to what is in the mentality of the soul. Joseph's loud crying was an expression of his emotion of grief for the death of his father.

This is the fifth and final time that Joseph weeps in the book of Genesis (See Genesis 42:24; 43:30; 45:1-2; 44:15; 50:17).

The kiss was an expression of Joseph's affection for his father as well as a farewell gesture to his father.

There are at least three reasons why the narrator emphasizes that Joseph grieved for his father and not his brothers, which is not to say that his brothers did not grieve for their father, they did. The narrator is emphasizing Joseph since this

incident features Joseph and the Egyptians in relation to Jacob's burial whereas in Genesis 50:12-15, the emphasis is back on the brothers again.

The second reason why the narrator emphasizes Joseph's grief and not his brothers is that he was the closest to his father. The third and final reason is that the narrator is attempting to demonstrate that God was keeping His promises to Jacob since in Genesis 46:4, God promised Jacob that Joseph would close his eyes.

Genesis 50:2

“Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel.”

Genesis 50:3

“Now forty days were required for it, for such is the period required for embalming. And the Egyptians wept for him seventy days.”

Genesis 50:3 records that the period of embalming in Egypt took forty days whereas the period of mourning took another thirty days. Joseph orders his physicians to embalm his father for two reasons.

The first was “political” in that by embalming his father, Joseph would be honoring his father in the eyes of the Egyptians since they would embalm their honored dead.

The second reason was “practical” in that by embalming his father, Joseph would be preparing his father's corpse for the long journey to Canaan where he would bury his father at the cave of Machpelah.

The Egyptians embalmed their dead since according to their religion they believed it would assist in the journey after death. Embalming the dead played a crucial role in the Egyptian religion and was bound up with the cult of Osiris and conceptions of the afterlife. The Egyptians believed in an afterlife and in relation to this they thought it important to preserve the physical body. In fact, they took meticulous care to prevent the decomposing of the corpse in order to ensure the right of the deceased to immortality but the embalming of Jacob and Joseph is without any religious significance.

The Israelites did not embalm their dead like the Egyptians since they did not subscribe to the Egyptian religion. However, the Israelites did handle the body of the deceased in a dignified fashion and would place the body in a grave in confident expectation of the resurrection.

The ancient historian Herodotus describes the process of embalming by the Egyptians, he writes, “They first take a crooked piece of iron and with it draw out the brain through the nostrils, thus getting rid of a portion while the skull is cleared of the rest by rinsing with drugs; next they make a cut along the flank with a sharp Ethiopian stone, and take out the whole contents of the abdomen, which they then cleanse, washing it thoroughly with palm wine and again frequently with an infusion of pounded aromatics. After this they fill the cavity with the purest bruised myrrh with cassia and every other sort of spicery except frankincense and sew up the opening. Then the body is placed in natrum for seventy days and covered entirely over. After the expiration of that space of time, which must not be exceeded, the body is washed and wrapped round from head to foot, with bandages of fine linen cloth, smeared over with gum, which is used generally by the Egyptians in the place of glue, and in this state it is given back to the relations, who enclose it in a wooden case which they have had made for the purpose, shaped into the figure of the man.” (The History, Great Books volume 5, page 66, section 86; Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc.)

Our text says that the Egyptians mourned for Joseph's father for seventy days, which were the number of days that the Egyptians would observe for an Egyptian king. Therefore, we see the nation of Egypt honored Joseph for his service to their nation in delivering it from famine by honoring his father and mourning for him as if his father was a dead Egyptian king.

Next, we will note Genesis 50:4-6 in which we will see Pharaoh granting Joseph permission to bury his father in Canaan.

Genesis 50:4-5

“When the days of mourning for him were past, Joseph spoke to the household of Pharaoh, saying, ‘If now I have found favor in your sight, please speak to Pharaoh, saying, ‘My father

made me swear, saying, ‘Behold, I am about to die; in my grave which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me.’ Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.”

Joseph is conveying the conversation that he had with his father prior to his death, which is recorded in Genesis 47:27-31.

The expression “the household of Pharaoh” refers to the members of the Egyptian government who assisted Pharaoh in state affairs. Some commentators suggest that Joseph spoke directly to Pharaoh’s advisors rather than Pharaoh himself because he was considered by the Egyptians as ceremonially unclean due to the mourning rites of the Egyptians however, the text does not say this to be the case. Since Joseph was the second most powerful man in Egypt, he needed to guard against giving an impression that he no longer needed to be accountable to Pharaoh. Therefore, he requests permission through Pharaoh’s advisors rather than Pharaoh directly since he wants to demonstrate to all of Pharaoh’s advisors that he still respects Pharaoh’s authority and considers himself accountable to Pharaoh.

Romans 13:1, “Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.”

Joseph tactfully omits the oath ceremony with his father in which his father prohibited him from burying him in Egypt since it might suggest a lack of commitment to Egypt on the part of Joseph (See Genesis 47:27-31) but instead he emphasizes with Pharaoh that his father had a tomb already prepared for himself.

The expression “If now I have found favor in your sight” is deferential language, which is normally used by an inferior when speaking to a superior and is used by Joseph in order to acknowledge that he is subordinate to Pharaoh and his dependence upon Pharaoh to permit him to meet his need in burying his father in Canaan.

Genesis 50:6

“Pharaoh said, ‘Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear.’”

Pharaoh grants Joseph permission to bury his father in Canaan without any hesitation since he greatly respects Joseph as a result of his service to the nation of Egypt and trusts Joseph since he has demonstrated great concern for the Egyptian people.

Genesis 50:7-8

“So Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his household and all the elders of the land of Egypt, and all the household of Joseph and his brothers and his father’s household; they left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen.”

“All the servants of Pharaoh” does “not” refer to slaves who are in bondage to another against their will but rather refers to Pharaoh’s advisers and officials in his cabinet who helped him in deciding state affairs.

“Elders of his household” refers to the senior dignitaries from Pharaoh’s court.

“Elders of the land of Egypt” refers to the senior dignitaries throughout the Egyptian empire.

“The household of Joseph” would include his wife Asenath, the daughter of Potiphera, the priest of On and his sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

The expression “his brothers and his father’s household,” seems redundant since Joseph’s brothers were a part of their father’s household, but such expressions are common in Hebrew and should be understood as “his brothers and in particular his father’s household.”

“His brothers” refers to Joseph’s eleven brothers: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad, Asher, Benjamin, Dan, and Naphtali.

“His father’s household” would include the wives and children and grandchildren of Jacob’s sons, not to mention the women and children of Shechem who were absorbed into Jacob’s family according to Genesis 34:29 as well servants.

The statement “they left only their little ones” would include of course the mothers of the children. Joseph’s family left only their little ones and their flocks and their herds in the land of Goshen for two reasons. First, it was a practical

necessity and secondly, to assure Pharaoh that Joseph intends to return to Egypt as prime minister.

Genesis 50:9

“There also went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company.”

The chariots and horseman accompanied the large funeral procession for protection from any would be hostile forces. So we can see that this was a massive state funeral to honor Joseph’s father.

Jacob’s funeral takes place in two stages according to Genesis 50:10-13: (1) The entire procession proceeds to a place at which a great public mourning ceremony is held. (2) After a week, then the immediate family continues the journey to the cave of Machpelah where in a private ceremony the body of Jacob is buried.

Genesis 50:10

“When they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, they lamented there with a very great and sorrowful lamentation; and he observed seven days mourning for his father.”

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on the location of “Atad,” writes, “The sixth century A.D. Madeba mosaic map locates an Alon Atad (terebinth of Atad) near Beth Agla (Beth Hogla-modern Deir Hajlah) between Jericho and the Dead Sea.” (Genesis, page 620-621, Zondervan)

“Threshing floor” is the noun *goren* (/r#G)) (go-ren), which was a place near a city where the people separated grain from straw and chaff and was often a bare rock on top of a hill where the wind could drive away the chaff.

Seven days was the usual period of time to mourn for the dead in Israel and in the ancient Middle East (See 1 Samuel 31:13; Job 2:13; Ezekiel 3:15).

“Lamented” is the verb *saphadh* (rp^s*) (saw-fad), which connotes that of loudly wailing, or specifically, short cries or exclamations of sorrow for someone who recently died. The verb was connected with other practices of mourning rites, such as tearing clothes, wearing sackcloth, a coarse and uncomfortable material worn next to the skin (2 Sam. 3:31), fasting (2 Sam. 1:12) and

beating one’s breast (Isa. 32:12). These actions were considered appropriate signifying anguish in the ancient world of Joseph’s day.

“Lamentation” is the noun *mispedh* (dP@s+m!) (mis-pade), which is used to describe more of a prolonged mourning custom that involves certain rituals, which we have noted rather than mere expressions of emotion.

The public display of sorrow indicated the communal and not just individual, nature of mourning. Mourning for the dead began immediately at death, went on as the body was carried to the tomb, was observed at the tomb and lasted at least seven days after the burial.

Genesis 50:11

“Now when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, ‘This is a grievous mourning for the Egyptians.’ Therefore it was named Abel-mizraim, which is beyond the Jordan.”

The term “Canaanite” denotes those individuals descended from Canaan who lived in the land west of the Jordan River before the conquest of Joshua and whose western border was the Mediterranean Sea, especially in the lower and coastal regions (Gen. 13:12; Num. 33:51).

In Genesis 10:19, Moses defines the borders of the Canaanites because it is this land that the Lord will dispossess for Israel and fulfill the prophecy of Noah in Genesis 9:24-25 regarding Canaan. The northern border of the land of the Canaanites went as far as Sidon, which is 120 miles north of Jerusalem and the southern border extended to Gerar, which is about 11 miles south-southeast of Gaza, which was on the coast 50 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

The Canaanites who lived in the highland regions were often called “Amorite.” At times the Hittites, Gergashites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, were called “Canaanites” but strictly speaking the nations who dwelt on the coasts or river lowlands were called “Canaanite” (Nm. 13:29).

The Canaanites were so impressed with the massive state funeral that the Egyptians were

holding for Israel that the Canaanites named the place “Abel-mizraim,” which means, “mourning of Egypt.”

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on the meaning of the name “Abel-mizraim,” writes, “The name involves a pun. Hebrew *`ebel* means, “mourning,” and *`abel* means “brook,” but only as the first part of a Canaanite place name (e.g. 2 Sam. 20:14, 15; Judg. 11:33; 2 Chron. 16:4). Hence the name means “brook of Egypt,” a play with “mourning of Egypt.” (Genesis, page 621, Zondervan).

Genesis 50:12-13

“Thus his sons did for him as he had charged them for his sons carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field for a burial site from Ephron the Hittite.”

Genesis 50:12-13 records Israel’s sons obeying his command to bury him in the cave of Machpelah in the land of Canaan, and which command appears in Genesis 49:29-32. Also, by burying his father in the land of Canaan, Joseph was obeying his father’s command to bury him in Canaan, which is recorded in Genesis 47:29-31.

Genesis 23 records that for four hundred shekels of silver, Abraham purchased from Ephron the Hittite “the cave of Machpelah” as a burial plot for Sarah, himself and his descendants.

“Machpelah” is located west of modern Hebron on the outskirts and the city is situated on the eastern slope of a narrow valley, which runs north and south and is surrounded by rocky hills.

“Hebron” was located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, on the way to Beersheba and was 3,040 feet above sea level, dominating a beautiful and fruitful area and ancient oaks (terebinths) filled the area.

“Mamre” was located in “Hebron” as indicated by the phrase “that is, Hebron” in Genesis 23:19 and received its name from its owner, Mamre, who was a chief of the Amorites who sought security in an alliance with Abram and was blessed because of Abram (cf. Gen. 14:13, 24).

“Ephron” was the son of Zohar and was among the crowd of Hittites who had come to the gate of the

city where Abraham negotiated the purchase of the burial plot with the Hittites and was an outstanding individual among these people.

Genesis 50:14

“After he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers, and all who had gone up with him to bury his father.”

Joseph’s return to Egypt fulfills his promise to Pharaoh, which is recorded in Genesis 50:5. It was the will of God that Joseph and his family return to Egypt and not the land of Canaan since the iniquity of the Amorite was not yet complete according to the prophecy given to Abraham recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

“Generation” is the noun *dor* (רַבְדָּ) (dore), which denotes a “cycle of time, a life span,” which in the context of Genesis 15 is calculated to be one hundred years since Abram had his first child at one hundred years of age (Gen. 21:5).

Therefore, the “fourth generation” indicates that after four hundred years Abram’s descendants, i.e., the nation of Israel would come back into to the land of Canaan promised to Abram by the Lord.

The “Amorite” is a figure of speech called “synecdoche of the part” where a part is put for the whole, thus the term “the Amorite” is put for the ten nations listed in Genesis 15:19-21, of which “the Amorite” and the “Canaanite” were a part of (cf. Gen. 48:22; Nm. 13:29; 21:21).

The Lord does not dispossess and judge a nation immediately until He has given it grace in the sense of giving it a sufficient amount of time to repent.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Once a nation has completely rejected God’s grace and every opportunity to repent and accept Christ as Savior, it will become totally and completely saturated with evil (see Lev. 18:24-28; 20:23) and then the Lord sends judgment. The judgment and dispossessing of these ten nations called the “Amorite” who are also called the “Canaanite” would be a fulfillment of Noah’s prophecy in Genesis 9:24-27.

Genesis 50:15-21 records after Jacob's death, Joseph assuring his brothers that he won't seek revenge upon them. This scene is the climax to the story of Joseph and his brothers for in it we see the tension between him and his brothers finally resolved.

Joseph had demonstrated through his words and actions in Genesis 45 that he had forgiven his brothers for selling him into slavery in Egypt. However, although they had admitted their guilt to God according to Genesis 44:14-17, they had never asked for forgiveness from Joseph himself nor offered an apology to him. Therefore, we see that now that their father is dead, their guilt feelings caused them to live in fear of Joseph who was the prime minister of Egypt.

Genesis 50:15

“When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, ‘What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!’”

This statement by Joseph's brothers indicates that they apparently concluded that Joseph had treated them so well only for their father's sake. They believed that Joseph would take his revenge upon them now that their father was dead. Their statement also reveals they with exception of Benjamin of course, still felt guilty for their past treatment of Joseph when he was seventeen years of age and attempted to kill him and then finally decided to sell him into slavery in Egypt for twenty pieces of silver.

Their sense of guilt was so strong that they could not really believe that Joseph had indeed forgiven them. Joseph's brothers had acknowledged their guilt to God regarding their ill treatment of Joseph in the past according to Genesis 44:14-17 and demonstrated through their conduct that they had repented of their actions but they had never admitted their guilt to Joseph.

“What if” is the conditional particle *lu'* (awI) (loo), which introduces the protasis of a 1st class condition, which indicates the assumption of truth for the sake of argument.

A conditional sentence has an “if” part and a “then” part. The “if” introduces the “protasis” and “then” introduces the “apodasis.” Often, the

“protasis” often introduces the “cause” and the “apodasis” the “effect.” In Genesis 50:15, the conditional particle *lu'* is introducing the protasis but the apodasis is not stated due to the figure of “aposiopesis.”

“Aposiopesis” (apo-si-o-pee-sis) is the Greek word *aposiopesis*, which means, “becoming silent,” from *aposiopao*, “to be silent after speaking, to keep silence, observe a deliberate silence.” The name of this figure of speech may be represented in English by the expression “sudden-silence.” It is the sudden breaking off of what is being said or written so that the mind may be the more impressed by what is too wonderful or solemn or awful for words. In Genesis 50:15, the figure of “aposiopesis” with the apodasis of the first class condition not stated makes the fear of Joseph's brothers appear all the more real. This figure expresses that in their imagination there was no telling what Joseph might do to them.

Genesis 50:16-17

“So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, ‘Your father charged before he died, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, ‘Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.’ And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.’ And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.”

Joseph's brothers do not speak directly to him begging his forgiveness but rather send a messenger in order to avoid a confrontation with Joseph because they fear that Joseph will kill them in retaliation for selling him into slavery.

The statement “Your father charged before he died, saying, ‘Thus you shall say to Joseph, ‘Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sins for they did you wrong’” is a reference to selling Joseph into slavery when he was seventeen years of age as recorded in Genesis 37. It is also a lie since the narrator does not connect their claim to historical fact and was spoken in fear that Joseph would take his revenge upon them for what they did to him when he was seventeen years of age.

If Jacob had really known the fact of Joseph's kidnapping and sale into slavery, he would

undoubtedly have made a clear reference to it in his final words to his sons.

The expression “the servants of the God of your father” indicates that Joseph’s brothers do not appeal to him on the basis that they are brothers but rather they appeal to his love and respect for their father and to the God who united them all.

Joseph weeps in response to his brothers’ request for forgiveness since they still misunderstood his magnanimity towards them when he forgave them upon revealing his identity after seventeen years in Egypt. Joseph forgave them unconditionally since he knew that their cruel treatment of him was a part of God’s plan.

Joseph had the capacity to forgive his brothers because he knew that it was a part of God’s plan from eternity past that he would be sold into slavery by his brothers in order that he might be used by God to deliver their family from famine (See Genesis 45:1-7).

Genesis 50:18

“Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, ‘Behold, we are your servants.’”

When the brothers learn from the messengers of Joseph’s emotional reaction to their request for forgiveness, they feel free to approach him. Once they have come into Joseph’s presence they fall down at his feet offering themselves as his servants, which was a fulfillment of the third and final stage of Joseph’s dream/prophecy that is recorded in Genesis 37:5-11.

Genesis 50:19

“But Joseph said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place?’”

Notice that he directs attention away to himself and to God who is sovereign and who ruled the personal history of his father, himself and his brothers. Joseph’s response to his brothers’ offer was to reassure them that he would not harm them for selling him into slavery in Egypt as indicated by his statement “do not be afraid.”

His rhetorical question, “for am I in God’s place?” demands a negative response and indicates that his brothers viewed him as indeed being in the place

of God. However, they failed to realize that Joseph was a servant of God and God’s instrument and was not their judge. Joseph’s rhetorical question reveals that he understood the limits of his authority given to him by God. He understood and practiced the spiritual principle taught by Paul in Romans 12.

Romans 12:17-21

“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.”

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”

“Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,’ says the Lord.”

“BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK; FOR IN SO DOING YOU WILL HEAP BURNING COALS ON HIS HEAD.”

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

When we try to exact revenge or get even we do not leave room for God to deal with the situation.

Genesis 50:20-21

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

Joseph’s statement “As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive” means that the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was figured by God into His plan from eternity past, which is called “the divine decree.”

God had figured into the divine decree so as to fulfill His sovereign will and thus to bring glory to Himself through Joseph’s brothers selling him into slavery. The divine decree is the eternal plan by which God has rendered certain all the events of the universe, including both angelic and human history-past, present and future and so therefore,

God rendered certain to take place that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt and it was thus a part of God's plan.

God's decree rendered all things as certain to occur and He decided that they would exist and so therefore, God rendered certain to occur that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt and God decided that these things would exist.

The divine decree took place in eternity past before anything was ever created and is God's eternal and immutable will. Therefore, it was a part of God's plan from eternity past that Joseph would be sold into slavery by his brothers.

The "providence" of God is the divine outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory and expresses the fact that the world and our lives are not ruled by chance or fate but by God. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers and ended up in Egypt did not happen by chance or fate but because God ordained for it to take place in order to fulfill His plan for Jacob's family and to bring glory to Himself.

The decree of God is the chosen and adopted plan of all God's works and so it was a part of God's chosen and adopted plan that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery in Egypt so that he might be the instrument God would use to deliver his family from famine as well as the entire world.

The decree of God is His eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will, whereby for His own glory He has foreordained whatever comes to pass. Therefore, it was part of God's eternal purpose according to the counsels of His own will for His own glory that Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery so that he might be the instrument God would use to deliver his family from famine.

The decree of God is the sovereign choice of the divine will (His sovereignty) and mentality (His omniscience) by which all things are brought into being and controlled, made subject to His pleasure, and producing His glorification. Therefore, the fact that Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers was the result of God's sovereign will and omniscience by which this

event was brought into being and was controlled and made subject to God's pleasure and glorified Him.

The "decree of God" is His eternal, holy, wise and sovereign purpose, comprehending at once all things that ever were or will be in their causes, courses, conditions, successions, and relations and determining their certain futurity (i.e., that they will certainly take place). When I say "comprehending" I mean that the omniscience of God is the source of the divine decrees by "determining" I mean that the sovereignty of God chose before anything existed which things would actually become historical events. Therefore, the omniscience of God comprehended at once in eternity past that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery.

God also comprehended at once in eternity past the course that these events would take and their conditions and relations and determined that these events would take place. Therefore, the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was sovereignly determined by God to take place and was known by God in eternity past before anything was created.

The decree of God is His eternal and immutable will regarding the future existence of events, which will happen in time and regarding the precise order and manner of their occurrence. Therefore, it was God's eternal and immutable will that Joseph's brothers would sell him into slavery and that he would end up in Egypt and God decreed that these events would take place in time and the precise order of events leading up to these events and the manner in which these events would transpire.

The will of God in common usage refers to what God desires of an individual or group in a particular situation and in relation to the divine decree refers to the decision God made in eternity past, from His attribute of sovereignty, which established that certain things would actually come into being while other things would not. The will of God is His sovereign choice as to what will take place in time.

God from His sovereignty decided in eternity past that Joseph would be sold into slavery by them and end up in Egypt and He decided that these

events would take place in the exact time that they did.

God in eternity past decreed that angels and human beings would have volition and would be allowed to make decisions contrary to His sovereign will and without compromising His justice.

In giving angels and men volition, God decreed that their decisions, whatever they might be, would certainly take place—even those that are contrary to His desires. Therefore, God decreed that the decisions of Joseph's brothers, Joseph and Jacob himself would all take place in time and even those by Joseph's brothers, which were contrary to His desires.

Being omniscient, God had the good sense to know ahead of time what men and angels would decide, and He not only decreed that those decisions would exist but He also decreed the exact manner, consistent with His integrity, in which He would handle their decisions. Since God is omniscient He knew ahead of time the decisions that Joseph's brothers would make and decreed that those decisions would exist and He also decreed the exact manner in which He would handle their decisions. Therefore, Joseph being sold into slavery by his brothers was a part of God's sovereign will that is based upon His omniscient knowledge of all the facts concerning what will take place in the future.

The Lord knows perfectly, eternally and simultaneously all that is knowable, both the actual and the possible and thus has all knowledge of every event in human and angelic history. Therefore, the Lord looked down the corridors of time and decreed to take place Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery.

The selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers was figured into the divine decree and was a part of the providence of God, which is the outworking of the divine decree, the object being the final manifestation of God's glory. God used the sale of Joseph into slavery in Egypt to deliver not only the Egyptians but also Joseph's family and the entire world from starvation, which glorified God in that it manifested God's power and love for all men.

If Joseph doesn't get sold into slavery in Egypt by his brothers, he never ends up with Potiphar and if he never ends up with Potiphar in Egypt, then he would never have met Pharaoh's cupbearer. If Joseph does not meet Pharaoh's cupbearer, then he never meets Pharaoh and if he never meets Pharaoh, then Joseph will never be able to interpret the dreams God gave Pharaoh, which predicted the impending seven year famine.

If he does not interpret these dreams of Pharaoh, then he will not be able to give Pharaoh the contingency plan to deal with this impending disaster and if so, then Pharaoh would have no one in his kingdom to administrate the nation of Egypt during the seven years of plenty and famine. If Joseph does not administrate the nation of Egypt during the seven years of plenty and famine, then the nation of Egypt would be destroyed by the famine and if so, Joseph's family would have died of starvation since they came to Egypt to buy food to deal with the famine in Canaan.

If Joseph's family dies of starvation, then the nation of Israel dies in its infancy and if so, then the Savior cannot come into the world and then there would be no salvation for man and no fulfillment of the four unconditional covenants to Israel (Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and New) and thus making God unfaithful.

We can look at the selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers in relation to the will of God from even another perspective. The selling of Joseph into slavery in Egypt by his brothers is another example of the function of the "permissive," "directive" and "overruling" will of God.

The "directive" will of God refers to what God directly requires of an individual, His "permissive" will refers to Him "permitting" His creatures to act contrary to what He desires and His "overruling" will refers to the fact that at times God "overrules" the bad decisions of His creatures in order to perpetuate His plan.

The "directive" will of God prohibited Joseph's brothers from attempting to murder him and sell him into slavery however God "permitted" their decisions to take place that were contrary to His "directive" will. God also "overruled" their bad decisions in that He caused Pharaoh to promote

Joseph as prime minister of Egypt in order to deliver not only Egypt from famine but also Joseph's family and the entire world.

Bruce K. Waltke commenting on Joseph's statement "So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones," writes, "The logic of God's providence to reckon their evil as for good leads to the logical conclusion that they need not fear, for Joseph will care for them. He is his brothers' keeper. (Genesis, page 623, Zondervan).

The statement "So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them" means that Joseph comforted his brothers and continued to speak to their hearts in the sense that he kept encouraging and reassuring them of his love for them and God's love for them.

Genesis 50:22-26 presents to us the conclusion of Joseph's life, his last words and his death. Genesis 50:22-23 contain a notice of the conclusion of Joseph's life.

Genesis 50:22

"Now Joseph stayed in Egypt, he and his father's household, and Joseph lived one hundred and ten years."

The family of Joseph remained in Egypt after the seven years of famine had ended. The reason why Joseph's family remained in Egypt after the seven years of famine and did not return to the land of Canaan was that it was according to the will of God.

If you recall, before departing Canaan for Egypt, Jacob sought God's will as to whether or not he should go to Egypt and God responded by telling him that he should go to Egypt for there He would make Jacob's family into a great nation.

Genesis 46:3, 4

"He said, 'I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there.'"

'I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes.'"

Therefore, Jacob's family remained in Egypt even after the seven years of famine because God

wanted them to be there so that He could make them into a great nation.

Also, remember by remaining in Egypt, Joseph's family would be fulfilling the prophecy given to Abraham recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Genesis 15:13, 14

"God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.'"

"But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions."

The other reason why Joseph's family remained in Egypt and did not return to Canaan after the seven year famine was that Joseph could not leave because of his responsibilities as the prime minister of Egypt.

The age at which Joseph died demonstrates clearly how the human life span was becoming shorter and shorter as evidenced in the fact that Noah died at the age of 950, Shem at 500, Terah died at 205, Abraham at 175, Isaac died at the age of 180, Jacob was 147 when he died and Joseph died at the age of 110. The reason for the decrease in the human life span was due to the removal of the vast water vapor canopy that covered the earth during the antediluvian period and precipitated during the flood of Noah.

The vast transparent water vapor canopy that resided above the earth's atmosphere and precipitated in the days of Noah gave the Pre-Flood earth a warm climate and produced a greenhouse effect with no storms in the earth's atmosphere.

Genesis 1:6-7 records the restoration of this vast water vapor canopy.

Genesis 1:6, 7

"Next, God commanded, 'let there be an atmosphere in the middle of the waters, and let it be a cause of division between waters from waters.'"

"Consequently, God restored the atmosphere and thus caused a division between the

waters, which were beneath the atmosphere and the waters, which were above the atmosphere, thus it came to pass as previously described.”

Genesis 7:11 records the precipitation of this vast water vapor canopy during the flood of Noah.

Genesis 7:11, “In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on the same day all the fountains of the great deep burst open, and the floodgates of the sky were opened.”

The environment during the antediluvian period was changed radically and dramatically with the flood that took place in the days of Noah. Therefore, the antediluvian world was radically different climatically and geologically from the “present heavens and the earth” (2 Pet. 3:7).

During the antediluvian period the entire earth was warm all year round, having no storms because of this vast transparent water vapor canopy but when it precipitated during the flood of Noah, there became “cold and heat, and summer and winter” according to Genesis 8:22 and the emergence of the North and South Poles.

This vapor canopy would be highly effective in filtering out ultraviolet radiations, cosmic rays, and other destructive energies from outer space.

Many of these are the source of both somatic and genetic mutations, which decrease the viability of the individual and the species, respectively, thus, the canopy would contribute effectively to human and animal health and longevity.

Jacob died when Joseph was fifty-six years of age according to a comparison of Genesis 41:46, 53; 45:6 and 47:28 and Joseph lived for another fifty-four years after that and died at the age of 110.

Genesis 50:23, “Joseph saw the third generation of Ephraim's sons; also the sons of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were born on Joseph's knees.”

This passage reveals that Joseph lived to see some of his great grandchildren. His oldest son Manasseh had two sons whose names were Machir and Asriel according to Genesis 50:23, Numbers 26:29-31 and 1 Chronicles 7:14. Joseph possibly had others whose names were not recorded and it

appears that the children of Machir were born while Joseph was still alive and the most famous of these was Gilead, the ancestor of the Gileadites according to Numbers 26:29.

Nahum Sarna commenting on this expression “were born on Joseph's knees” writes, “The key to this phrase lies in a symbolic gesture, widely attested in Near Eastern sources, especially Hittite, as well as in the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome. The placing or reception of a child on or by the knees of another signifies legitimation, whether in acknowledgement of physical parenthood or by adoption. This practice is again referred to in the Bible in Genesis 48:12 and 50:23 and in Job 3:12. Its origin is in the idea of the knee as the seat of generative power” (The JPS Torah Commentary, pages 207-208, The Jewish Publication Society).

The phrase “were born on Joseph's knees” means that just as Jacob adopted Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, Joseph also adopted Manasseh's son, Machir.

“Machir” is the proper noun *makhir* (ryk!m*) (maw-keer), which means, “one who is sold” and is a word play with the life of Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers.

Machir's descendants, the Machirites conquered Gilead, part of their inherited territory (See Numbers 32:39f; Josh. 17:1) and became so influential that eventually the name “Machir” designated the entire tribe of Manasseh (See Judges 5:14).

Genesis 50:24-25 contain the last words of Joseph, which were spoken in faith in the promises of God.

Genesis 50:24

“Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.’”

“Brothers” is the noun *ach* (ja*) (awkh), which does “not” refer to his half-brothers, the sons of Leah, Bilhah, Zilpah and nor does it refer to his full brother Benjamin since that would indicate that Joseph died before his brothers, many of

whom were much older than him, which seems highly unlikely. Rather, the term *ach*, “brothers” refers to the Israelite people as a whole, which is confirmed in Genesis 50:25 by the expression, “sons of Israel.”

Joseph’s statement “I am about to die” links him with the death of the other patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac. Like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph’s last concern was concerning the fulfillment of the promises of God (See Genesis 24:1-7; 28:1-4; 47:29-31).

In the Hebrew text, the expression “God will surely take care of you” is composed of the following: (1) Noun *Elohim* (<yh!Oa\$), “God” (2) Qal infinitive absolute compliment form of the verb *paqadh* (dq^P*) (paw-kad), “to intervene” (3) 3rd person masculine singular qal imperfect form of the verb *paqadh* (4) Preposition *eth* (ta@) (ayth), “for” (5) 2nd person masculine plural pronominal suffix, “all of you.”

The term *paqadh* means, “to intervene” indicating that Joseph is assuring the Israelites that God would intervene for them in order to fulfill His promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan.

The infinitive absolute form of the verb *paqadh* stands before the finite verb of the same root, *paqadh* in order to intensify the certainty or force of the verbal idea, thus Joseph is predicting that God “would surely intervene” on behalf of the Israelites. This construction literally reads in the Hebrew, “intervening, He will intervene” but to the Hebrew mind, it means, “He will surely intervene.” Therefore, Joseph is communicating to his family in emphatic terms that God would intervene on their behalf in the future to deliver them and bring them back to the land of Canaan.

Joseph’s statement “God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which he promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob” is a reference to the Exodus from Egypt, which would fulfill the prophecy given to Abraham, recorded in Genesis 15:12-16.

Exodus 12:40, 41

“Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years.”

“And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day, all the hosts of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt.”

Joseph is also referring to the “Palestinian” covenant, which the Lord established with Abraham and confirmed to both Isaac and Jacob and was a confirmation and enlargement of the original “Abrahamic” covenant and amplified the land features of the “Abrahamic” covenant (Gen. 13:14-15; 15:18).

The “Palestinian” Covenant stipulated that the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who exercise faith alone in Christ alone would not only come into permanent possession of the land of Canaan but also most of the land in Turkey, East Africa, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and Red Sea, Syria, Iraq, Jordan.

The boundaries of this land grant are on the Mediterranean, Aegean Sea, Euphrates River and the Nile River (See Genesis 15:18).

The Lord originally promised the land of Canaan to Abraham (See Genesis 12:7; 13:14-15, 17; 17:8). The Lord extended the territorial boundaries of this promise of land with Abraham (See Genesis 15:18) and reconfirmed the promise of land to Isaac (See Genesis 26:3).

The Lord reconfirmed the promise of land to Jacob at Bethel when he was fleeing from Esau (See Genesis 28:13) and reconfirmed this promise of land again to Jacob at Bethel when he returned to Canaan (See Genesis 35:12).

The “Palestinian” covenant was reiterated to Moses (Ex. 6:2-8) who described the geographical boundaries of the land in Numbers 34:1-12 and who prophesied the fulfillment of this covenant during the millennium in Deuteronomy 30:1-9.

The Lord promises that this land would be given to Abraham’s descendants and this promise was fulfilled to a certain extent by Israel under Joshua (Josh. 21:43-45; cf. 13:1-7) and David and Solomon (1 Kgs. 4:20-25; Neh. 9:8).

The “Palestinian” covenant will have its literal and ultimate fulfillment during the millennial reign of Christ (Isa. 11:11-12; Jer. 31-37; Ezek. 34:11-16; Hos. 1:10-11; Joel 3:17-21; Amos 9:11-15; Micah 4:6-7; Zeph. 3:14-20; Zech. 8:4-8).

Genesis 50:25

“Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, ‘God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.’”

The designation “the sons of Israel” emphasizes the national identity of Israel/Jacob’s sons and not their personal identity as Jacob’s sons. The brothers entered Egypt as a nation in its infancy whereas their descendants will leave four hundred years later as a powerful nation.

By making the Israelites swear to him that they would bury his bones in Canaan, Joseph was expressing his confidence and faith in God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob to give them the land of Canaan and looks forward in faith to the Exodus, which was prophesied to Abraham in Genesis 15:12-16.

Hebrews 11:22, “By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.”

Exodus 13:19 records that Moses fulfilled this oath and buried Joseph’s remains at Shechem in the land Jacob had given him as a gift (See Genesis 48:21-22; Joshua 24:32).

Exodus 13:19, “Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, ‘God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.’”

Joshua 24:32, “Now they buried the bones of Joseph, which the sons of Israel brought up from Egypt, at Shechem, in the piece of ground which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred pieces of money; and they became the inheritance of Joseph’s sons.”

Genesis 50:26

“So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt.”

Joseph’s body was embalmed and placed in a coffin, which would serve as a perpetual reminder to the Israelites of God’s promise to them that God would bring them back to Canaan. Notice that

unlike his father Jacob, there is no record of Joseph receiving a massive state funeral indicating that the situation in Egypt had already begun to worsen for the Israelites anticipating the cruel treatment the Israelites experienced four hundred years later recorded in the book of Exodus. Therefore, we see the book of Genesis closing setting the stage for the events that would take place four hundred years later when God would use Moses to deliver the Israelites from their bondage in Egypt.