

# **OT Bible Characters - 1**

## **Genesis & The Law**

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# Famous People in the Old Testament

A careful study of the Scriptures in the Old Testament reveals that one of their primary purposes is to teach us about the lives of the men and women who lived before us. The reason for this is made clear in the book of Ecclesiastes.

*That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. 11 There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after. Eccl 1:9-11*

Since there is "nothing new under the sun," "that which has been is what will be" and "that which is done is what will be done" everything faced by those recorded in Scripture will be faced again by you and I. If we do not learn from their failures then they will also become our failures. If we learn from their success and follow their conduct as a template or example then their success will become our success. This is the very point of I Cor. 10:1-12(don't do what they did or we will fail as they failed) and Heb 11:1-12:3(if their faith is ours, we will be victorious as they were victorious).

God has encouraged us to learn as much as we can about them. It will be the goal of this class to teach, make applications for today and train us in the necessary tools to make their lives as valuable as possible to us. There are at least five important reasons for us to study them.

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|---|--|
| 1. They are a Great Cloud of Witnesses.   | 2. Written for our example and admonition. |
| 3. They were Written for Our Learning.  | 4. They make us Wise unto Salvation.       |
| 5. MOST IMPORTANT REASON:<br>Our heritage and the beginnings of our elect race. | These are our fathers and mothers.         |

## 1. A Great Cloud of Witnesses

The Eleventh Chapter of Hebrews has been called the great chapter of faith. But although the word *faith* carries itself through the entire chapter there is another word that also helps us see the importance of the lives of these men and women to us today. It is the word *witness*(noun)/*testimony*(verb).

*"martureo... to be a witness, to bear witness, testify, i.e. to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something, or that (so in the N. T.) he knows it because taught by direct revelation or inspiration... to prove or confirm by testimony. b. emphatically; to utter honorable testimony, give a good report... pass. ... to be borne (good) witness to, to be well reported of, to have (good) testimony borne to one, accredited, attested, of good report, approved..." (Thayer, p 390-391; 3140)*

There are two witnesses in this section. The first is God who is bearing witness to the value of the conduct of these faithful men and women. He bore witness of them that they were "accredited, attested, of good report, approved." He did this at the time they lived by recording how He used them. He now testifies here in Hebrews their lives were the quality of life He wants each of us to imitate.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it **the elders obtained a good testimony**. 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible. 4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which **he obtained witness** that he was righteous, God testifying of His gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. 5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, "and was not found, because God had taken him"; for before he was taken **he had this testimony**, that he pleased God.... 39 And all these, having **obtained a good testimony through faith**, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Heb 11:1-5; 39-40*

The second is the testimony they are now giving to us through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that it is all worth it! That any and all sacrifices that must be made to maintain our faith and trust in God are more than worth all the efforts we must put forth. These men and women are ready to “*affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced.*”

*12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, Heb 12:1*

Abel	11:4
Enoch	11:5
Noah	11:7
Abraham & Sarah	11:8
Isaac & Jacob	11:9, 20
Joseph	11:22
Amram & Jochebed	11:23

Moses	11:24
Joshua & Israel	11:30
Rahab	11:31
Gideon	11:32
Barak	11:32
Samson	11:32
Jepthah	11:32

David	11:32
Samuel	11:32
the Prophets	11:32
Daniel	11:33
Shadrach/Meschach & Abednego	11:34
Multitudes	11:33-38

The more we can learn about these people the more powerful their testimony will become and the clearer we will see why God testified about them. These lives can change our lives. They can motivate us and convict us. They can reprove and rebuke us. They can exhort and admonish us. They can provoke us to love and good works. How many of these people do we know well? How often are our decisions modified or plans changed because their lives help us see what we must do to be successful and victorious?

## 2. Written for our Example and Admonition

There are so many similarities between Israel leaving Egypt and journeying to the promised land and our leaving the world and journeying toward the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that the Holy Spirit used their lives as an example for our own. For the most part the testimony is negative with God showing us through their own mistakes what we can't do to avoid their fate. He began with the similarity of how the journey began and unfolded.

There are several parallels between how Israel left Egypt and how we leave the world. They were *baptized into Moses* as we were *baptized into Christ*. They “*all ate the same spiritual food,*” (manna) “*and all drank the same spiritual drink*” (water miraculously provided) in the same way we eat a spiritual food (unleavened bread) and a spiritual drink (fruit of the vine) (1Cor 10:1-4; 16-17; 11:20-34). So what they did is what we do, so “*these things became our examples,*” and “*all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition*” (1Cor 10:6,11). Their journey to the promised land began as ours. Their relationship with God was similar to ours and their temptations are our temptations.

For us today, “*by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body,*” while for them they were “*all baptized into Moses.*” (1 Cor 12:13; 10:1-2). What did Israel do in passing through the Red Sea with water piled up on both sides and a cloud covering them that so closely imitated what sinners do in baptism that Paul could call their path through the sea a baptism?

While in Egypt, “*The Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service*” (Ex 1:13-14). This bondage was so harsh, “*the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God*” then “*God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob*” (Ex 2:23-24). Pharaoh refused to let them go until the tenth plague, but even after leaving Egypt they were not yet free: “*Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us*” (Ex 14:5). As long as Israel was on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea they were not safe. “*The Egyptians chased after them with all the*

*horses and chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and they overtook them camping by the sea. As Pharaoh drew near, the sons of Israel looked, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they became very frightened; so the sons of Israel cried out to the LORD” (Ex 14:9-10).*

God saved them as *“the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.”* Then when *“the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.* In passing through the Red Sea and *“being baptized into Moses,” “the LORD saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians.” (Ex 14:22, 28, 30).*

Before this “baptism” they were still in bondage and under Pharaoh’s power. After their “baptism,” Pharaoh and his army were destroyed and they were saved. The similarities of this type and antitype of baptism:

We were buried with Jesus in our “ <i>baptism into Christ.</i> ”	Rom. 6:4
They were buried with Moses in their “ <i>baptism into Moses</i> ”	1Cor 10:1-2
After “ <i>baptism into Moses</i> ” no longer slaves to Egypt.	Ex 14:22, 28
After “ <i>baptism into Christ</i> ” no longer slaves of sin.	Rom 6:6
After “ <i>baptism into Moses</i> ” under the dominion of God through Moses.	
After “ <i>baptism into Christ</i> ” under the dominion of God through Christ.	

Those who refused to pass through the sea perished by Pharaoh’s army and those who refused to enter the ark perished by the flood. Do we see the point? Those who refuse to be baptized will perish in their sins! The children of Israel have many parallels to us today. They were baptized just as we are baptized. They were baptized to Moses when they went through the Red sea.

But in spite of all the blessings the “baptism unto Moses” gave them, their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. The things they did that led to their destruction are critically important. The knowledge gleaned by knowing their lives could spare us what destroyed them. But this can only happen if we know their lives and remember them during the course of each day. Toward this end all negative examples God has revealed must be learned. If we do not know them we can’t use them as examples and they will not admonish us.

All Israel in the days of Moses	Ex. - Deut.
10 Spies / Joshua & Calab	Num 13-14
Korah & Balaam	Jude 11
Nadab & Abihu	Num 10:1-2
Aaron & Miriam	Num 11
Jannes & Jambres	2 Tim 3:8
Pharaoh	Rom 9:15-18

Israel’s unfaithfulness: lust after evil things sexual immorality idolaters tempt Christ Complain
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But not all the examples are negative. James wanted us to learn about the lives of all the prophets and Job so we can learn from their example and be strengthened.

*My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. 11 Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord — that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. Jas 5:10-11*

So the OT prophets From Genesis (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham) to Malachi are examples we must learn and have instant recall if they are to do the work God intended for them to do for us.

### 3. Written for Our Learning

*For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Rom 15:4-5*

The term “whatsoever” helps us see the fulness of the importance of all that is written in the Old Covenant. Not for law and obedience but for learning, so we can learn patience and comfort and might have hope.

*“hosos ... a relative adjective ... of time (as long as): ...b. of abundance and multitude; how many, as many as; how much, as much as:... (A. V. often whatsoever), ... Romans 15:4...” (Thayer 3745)*

There are 37 books in the Old Testament. They have been arranged into five categories with either five or twelve books in each:

Five	Books of Law,
Twelve	Books of History,
Five	Books of Poetry,

Five	Books of the Major Prophets
Twelve	Books of the Minor Prophets.

All of these “*were written aforetime.*” If we imagine these books as the boundaries of a lake, then all that is written within them is like the surface of the water within that boundary. This relative adjective takes all the things in all these books, draws a circle around all of them and expresses everything written in them as within the boundary of that circle. Nothing is overlooked, no exceptions. From the Genesis account of creation and sin in the garden to the final words of Malachi. From Cain and Abel to Nadab and Abihu along with Balaam’s talking donkey. They are all written for our learning. Nothing superfluous or unimportant. Even the distinctions of days and meats is still for our learning. All the prophecies and their teachings are for our learning. It is all for our learning. Look at Hebrews and Galatians and think of how much what was written aforetime has great importance to our understanding of the New Covenant.

Again, Hebrews eleven teaches that all the characters in these things written aforetime are a great cloud of witnesses we need to learn. The same is true of 1Cor 10 where the negative side of these characters are also discussed. We have much to learn from Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel; Noah; Abraham; Isaac; Jacob; Joseph; Moses. We learn from Nadab and Abihu; Saul; David; Solomon. We learn things from their lives that keep us from making the same mistakes. We learn from the law, we see the New Testament truths revealed and expounded upon there. We learn from prophecy. We learn that our faith has great basis and foundation. Many things are learned from a careful reading and meditation of the Old Testament scriptures.

Studying, learning, and having good recall of these Scriptures has the ability to increase our patience or endurance,.

*“hupomone... 1. steadfastness, constancy, endurance... in the N. T. the characteristic of a man who is unswerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings... 2. a patient, steadfast waiting for... 3. a patient enduring, sustaining...” (Thayer, p. 644; 5281)*

While Paul and James both reveal that the primary way that this “*patient steadfast waiting for*” is developed is through our own personal trials, Paul gives another here.

*And not only so, but we also rejoice in our tribulations: knowing that tribulation worketh stedfastness; 4 and stedfastness, approvedness; and approvedness, hope: Rom 5:3-4*

*Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptations; 3 Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh patience. 4 And let patience have (its) perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4*

As we read their lives we are stirred by their own patience and seek to emulate it.



*Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and of patience, the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. 11 Behold, we call them blessed that endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful. Jas 5:10-11*

A study of these Scriptures helps us see that all who serve God suffer persecution, trials and sorrows. We see through their example that it can be done. Others have suffered far worse than we and that knowledge can help when we are struggling. We can remain under them and be victorious. The Scriptures will help us.

Another great value behind the Old Testament scriptures revolves around the comfort they bring. As one looks carefully at the definition of this word, there is some difference of meaning which even the translators have taken into account. While some translations(ASV KJV NKJV) have *comfort* and others(ESV NASB) *encouragement*. When Greek speaking people used this word they were expressing they were right up next to them conveying an important message. While this close depending upon the need, it conveyed the emotion of entreaty, exhortation, encouragement or consolation and comfort.

*“paraklesis... (parakaleo, q.v.)... 1. prop. a calling near, summons,... 2. imploration, supplication, entreaty... 3. exhortation, admonition, encouragement... 4. consolation, comfort solace... 5. univ. persuasive discourse, stirring address, --instructive, admonitory, consolatory; powerful hortatory discourse...” (Thayer, p. 483; 3874)*

The Scriptures do all of these things. They draw us right up next to God’s side and allow him to implore, encourage, console, persuade, and comfort. Which one English word can convey all this? The things written aforetime become a mentor, a comforting and encouraging friend to help us. They will bring us encouragement, admonition, beseeching and begging necessary to motivate us in any dire situation that we might be called upon to pass through in life. We can be stirred by David, by Shadrach Meshach and Abednego, We can be warned by Saul and Jeroboam. We can be comforted by Job and Jeremiah. Most any need that comes up in our life can be met by one or another man or event found in the Old Testament.

Learning the things written aforetime, gaining perseverance and comfort and encouragement leads us to have this hope. Hope is a compound emotion made up of two essential things. First, it must be based upon something we want to happen, something we are looking forward to and will bring us great joy. Thus it is something we want and desire very deeply. Second, it must be something that can be expected.

*“elpis... expectation, hope; i.e expectation whether good or ill; 1. rarely in a bad sense, expectation of evil, fear;... 2. much more freq. in the classics, and always in the N. T. , in a good sense: expectation of good, hope; and in the Christian sense, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation...” (Thayer, p. 205-206; 1680)*

Every Christian has the former. It is the latter that brings such great difficulty with hope. Everyone wants to be saved and receive eternal life. But with all the troubles, trials and sins, it is sometimes very difficult to believe that we will actually receive it. So it is the “*confident expectation*” element of our hope that many find difficult. This is one of those areas with the things written aforetime shine most brightly. When we see the mercy and compassion of God toward Israel even when they were wicked adulterers, idolaters and murderers, we begin to grasp how deep God’s love and mercy can be. David’s sin with Bathsheba gives hope to all who struggle with temptation and sin. Samson gives hope to those who have fallen through their own folly but want to do better. Moses gives hope that even the most public of sins can be forgiven. Rahab that regardless of how wicked and low we have gone, we can rise above it. On and on we go. There is so much the Old Covenant can do to give hope. All we must do is learn it and be ready to apply it both to ourselves and to others.

When David committed adultery and murder, he sought to hide it. He would have greatly preferred that these lapses in his life be forgotten, but thousands who have sinned in similar ways have received hope from God’s forgiveness of this man. Job spoke in such a way that God told him he had “*condemned him that he might be justified*”. Yet God forgave and blessed him. Noah got drunk, Abraham lied, Sarah laughed, Moses failed to sanctify God, on and on it goes. Brethren

there is hope in the Old Testament. Foolish are we indeed when we fail to find it and pass our days on the earth in worry and concern over things that could be resolved in an instant if we would but allow that Old Covenant to become our friend and guide.

## **4. Make Us Wise unto Salvation**

The Old Covenant Scriptures are those Timothy was taught from childhood. Paul had taken up that education and completed it. These Scriptures will give us the wisdom to receive our salvation. All Scripture is profitable and all the characters recorded in the Scriptures will not only make us wise unto salvation, but since they are given by inspiration of God, they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. We never know what can be learned in any obscure passage of Scripture. God's promise is that with the knowledge of all Scripture, the man of God will be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

*But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, 15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:14-17*

God's testimonies become our counselor:	<u>Ps 119:24;</u>
They make one wiser than their enemies:	<u>Ps 119:98</u>
Give more understanding than all teachers	<u>Ps 119:99</u>
Understand more than the ancients	<u>Ps 119:100</u>
A lamp to one's feet and light to one's path	<u>Ps 119:105</u>

Jesus used Moses at the burning bush to prove the resurrection. He also used the queen of Sheba, the men of Sodom, Solomon, David and the showbread and many other characters to illustrate and elaborate on important points. Points we may not fully understand until all the Scriptures make us wise unto salvation.

## **5. MOST IMPORTANT REASON:**

These are our fathers, our heritage, the beginnings of our elect race. We are now strangers, sojourners and pilgrims. Just like our father Abraham and the more we understand about his life and the lives of his other children, the better prepared we will be to deal with it in our own lives.

*Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 1 Pet 1:1*

*And if ye call on him as Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to each man's work, pass the time of your sojourning in fear: 1 Pet 1:17*

*Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul; 1 Pet 2:11*

*By faith he became a sojourner in the land of promise, as in a (land) not his own, dwelling in tents, with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: 10 for he looked for the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:9-10*

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb 11:13*

It is of the highest importance that each of us see ourselves in this light at all times that we understand that we are not of this world and that we will never be able to fit in.

Added to this is the greatness of what we have become a part of. We are now working out God's eternal purpose in the church continuing the great purpose that began with Abraham and continues

with us his children.

*Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands — 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ... 19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Eph 2:11-13; 19-20*

Paul made it clear to the Romans that what Israel had before Christ's death we still have today. For we were grafted in to the same root and lump as they.

*4 who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; 5 of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. Rom 9:4-5*

*For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. 17 And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, 18 do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. Rom 11:16-18*

As we get to each character, we will bring out one or more of these points. It is an enriching study that we should through ourselves into with all our heart.

# Adam & Eve - 1 - Temptation & Sin

## The Creation (Gen. 1-2)

The first two chapters of Genesis record separate accounts of the creation. In the first chapter, God gives a chronological description of how things were created and the order in which they were created. The Second Chapter describes the creation in the order in which God worked with Adam and then Eve.

### Chronological Order of the Creation(Genesis 1).

Day 1	1:1-5	Light	Day 5	1:20-23	Fish and Birds
Day 2	1:6-8	Firmament	Day 6	1:24-31	Animals and Man
Day 3	1:9-13	Dry land / Vegetation	Day 7	2:1-3	God Rested
Day 4	1:14-19	Sun Moon and Stars			

**New Testament Applications:** 1Cor. 15:35-41. The bodies created on Day 3-6 used to illustrate resurrection.

Day 3: Seeds/Plants

Day 4: Celestial and terrestrial bodies: Differing glory of the sun, the moon and each star.

Day 5-6 Different flesh of fish, birds, animals and man.

*But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" 36 Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain — perhaps wheat or some other grain. 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. 39 All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. 40 There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 41 There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor 15:35-42*

### How God created everything with man at the center(Genesis 2).

2:4-6 Earth created, **no man** to till it and no plants. Earth watered by mist. (Midst of day 3)

2:7-14 The Lord God **formed man**. Though this account jumps to the sixth day, there is no contradiction. Everything that occurred happened exactly in the order recorded in the first chapter. This section only explains how man fit into the creation. Everything is presented to describe Adam's role.

1. Adam formed from dust, God did not make Eve at the same moment, nor did God make Eve from dust as He had all creatures. God made Adam first and he was alone.
2. Two specific trees identified: Tree of Life and Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.
3. God also revealed garden of Eden was watered by a river that flowed through it.

2:15-17 Adam told not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before Eve was created.

1. Adam was placed into the garden to tend and keep it.
2. God also gave Adam permission to eat of all the trees(including the tree of life) before He created Eve. Only the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was forbidden.

2:18-20 Adam made alone on sixth day.

1. God decreed: "*It is not good that man should be alone*" and promised to make a helper.
2. Not stated if Adam was present to witness the creation of the animals from the dust.
3. But they were all brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. God allowed

Adam to name all the animals and all the birds.

4. God made it clear to Adam through this process there was not found a helper comparable to him.

2:21-25 God put Adam to sleep

1. God took a rib from Adam's side. This was very different from everything other being God created. All other males and females with the breath of life were formed from the dust of the ground.
2. God made woman out of that rib. They were literally one flesh.
3. When Adam awoke they were one flesh and married. Adam did not decide to marry Eve. There was no wedding ceremony. God created marriage at the same moment He created woman.

### **Jesus validates this account:**

*And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' 5 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'? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." Matt. 19:4-6*

## **Temptation and Sin (Gen. 3)**

After Adam and Eve are created and begin their work in the garden, another character is introduced. The serpent is only introduced as a serpent. Satan actually used this serpent and Satan is the one who is working here. But the account leaves this silent. The real import of this event is left unrevealed until Jesus and His apostles.

*Ye are of (your) father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. John 8:44*

*And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. Rev. 12:9*

*But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ. 2 Cor. 11:3*

The serpent is the *Devil and Satan*. He is the *deceiver of the whole world*. His *lie beguiled Eve in his craftiness* and led to the *murder* of Adam and Eve. There is so much more we would like to know, but this is all the information God has given us.

*Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" 2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.'" 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." Gen. 3:1-5*

Eve shows no alarm or concern in the conversation. It began with a simple question and a scriptural answer. She was not present when God gave the command to Adam, but she is fully aware that they could eat of any tree in the garden except this one tree. They were not to eat or touch it, and she knew exactly what God said would happen. They would die. The serpent then spoke the lie that led to murder. He directly contradicted God, and implied it was God who was the liar. He then represented God as unfairly holding them back from something wonderful and important. Their eyes would be opened and they would become like God. The truth was exactly the opposite. They were already created in the image and likeness of God and eating this fruit would change them into the image and likeness of Satan.

*(My) little children, let no man lead you astray: he that does righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous: 8 he that does sin is of the devil; for the devil sins from the beginning. To this end was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 1 Jn. 3:7-8*

How did Satan murder them? Listen to Paul as he described his own death which is exactly what began here. It is this death that God warned would happen (*in the day you eat of it you will surely die*).

*What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet." 8 But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died 10 And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. 12 Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Rom. 7:7-12*

The law (*don't eat of the tree*) was given to reveal sin to Adam and Eve and protect them from it. They would not have known sin unless God's law had said "*you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.*" Through the devil's lie, sin took opportunity by that commandment to create sin. Like Paul, Eve was alive once without the law. But when that commandment came as it did through the serpent's lie, sin came alive and she died. The very command that was to bring life and keep Adam and Eve from death (*the day you eat you will die, so don't eat or touch it*) brought death. The serpent used sin to deceive Eve and kill her. This is exactly what Paul had said earlier in the book.

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — Rom. 5:12-13*

Satan used God's law to create sin and through sin he killed Eve and then Adam. The process that brought Eve to sin is explained in Genesis and elaborated upon later in the Scriptures. *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. Gen. 3:6*

Eve saw three things. She saw it was good for food (*lust of the flesh*), it was pleasant to the eyes (*lust of the eyes*), and it was desired to make one wise (*pride of life*). So all that was in the world was portrayed to Eve at that moment. Not as powerful, but exactly the same as what Satan sought to tempt Jesus with.

*Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life — is not of the Father but is of the world. 1 John 2:15-17*

Also at that moment, she was tempted when she was drawn away by her own desires (flesh, eyes and pride) and enticed. That desire then conceived, gave birth to sin and that sin brought forth death.

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Jas. 1:13-15*

After she had eaten we get only a very abbreviated account of what happened next.

*She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Gen. 3:6*

The account states that she gave to her husband with her. Does this mean Adam was present and witnessed it all? This does not seem possible after considering what Paul said about this event.

*For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 1 Tim. 2:13-14*

Eve was fully deceived, but Adam was not deceived at all. If he had watched the event and was not deceived, it seems logical that he would have stopped her. Yet Adam ate but was not deceived when he did so. Why did he eat then? The serpent did not trick him or deceive him. Eve did not trick him or deceive him. He knew exactly what he was doing! At his punishment God told him it was because he listened to the voice of his wife.

*Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree" Gen 3:17*

Yet exactly what she said and why he acted on her words is not recorded. Perhaps he loved Eve more than he loved God. Perhaps she pleaded with him as Delilah did Samson(Judges 16:15-17) We just don't know. But they both ate and they both received the consequences of their eating.

*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 coverings. Gen. 3:6-7*

The knowledge of good and evil brought immediate consequences. They immediately felt a sense of shame that led them to first cover themselves and secondly to a fear never before felt at the approach of God that led them to hide themselves.

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?" Gen. 3:8-11*

God already knew what had happened for He knows everything. This was not spoken out of ignorance, but to give them an opportunity to own up to what they had done. Their shame and fear should have led to godly sorrow and to a repentance that would confess the sin and plead with God for mercy. But instead of repentance and godly sorrow there were only excuses.

*Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate." 13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." Gen. 3:12-13*

Adam felt that he was not fully responsible and blamed Eve. Eve felt that she was not fully responsible and blamed the serpent. There was some truth in their words, but from the words spoken, there is not shred of contrition or any admission they were sorry for their own part in this sin. They *violated the covenant and covered their transgressions*. (Although some translations substitute *man* for *Adam* in these two passages, they are Adam's personal name in Hebrew. This name is only used ten times in the Bible and always translated Adam).

*If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, By hiding my iniquity in my bosom, Job. 31:33*

*But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me(ASV). Hos. 6:7*

## **The Wages of Sin**

### **Satan and the Serpent**

God punished all three for their conduct at that moment. Both Satan and the creature he used to speak through(the serpent) were punished. From that day forward man has despised, feared and sought to kill serpents. Many serpents possess deadly venom that can kill in a few moments. This change greatly enhanced the attitude of disgust and hatred. Satan's punishment was vague but after the Word became flesh, it was made clear.

*So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." Gen. 3:14-15*

This bruising began when Jesus began His ministry. As He cast out demons, He was binding Satan and removing his power. After Jesus return to heaven, God describes in the symbolism of the Revelation, a great battle where Satan's power was further limited. But the true bruising will occur in the end when he is cast into the lake of fire and will be tormented forever and ever.

*But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you. 29 Or how*

*can one enter into the house of the strong (man,) and spoil his goods, except He first bind the strong (man)? and then He will spoil his house. Mt. 12:28-29*

*And if Satan hath rise up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 But no one can enter into the house of the strong (man), and spoil his goods, except He first bind the strong (man); and then He will spoil his house. Mk. 3:26-27*

*Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." 18 And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Lk. 10:17-18*

*Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also himself in like manner partook of the same; that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb. 2:14-15*

*And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels (going forth) to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels; 8 And they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. 10 And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuses them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. 12 Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea: because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Rev. 12:7-9*

*And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. Rom. 16:20*

*And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Rev. 20:10*

## **Eve and all women**

The punishment of Eve fell upon her and all her female offspring. We don't know what childbirth would have been like before this curse. Perhaps there would have been no pain at all or perhaps minimal pain. But part of the curse was the pain that would come with childbirth. The second part of the curse had to do with the type of rule. Again we don't know what God's original plan for woman if the earth had remained uncursed. They were both created in the image of God and both given dominion over all the earth. What the original relationship between a husband and wife would have been was never revealed because it was not to be. Her role became subservient. When the Lord's church was created, it was revealed that the women would work with children and craft the future generations. She was not given the role to teach or to take dominion over man. All of this because Adam was made first and because she was beguiled and fell into transgression.

*To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; In pain you shall bring forth children; Your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you." Gen. 3:16*

*So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Gen. 1:27-28*

*Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. 12 And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. 15 Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. 1Tim. 2:11-15*

## **Adam and the race**

Adam's punishment fell upon all his offspring both men and women. The ground was cursed. No longer would it be easily plowed. No longer would weeds(if they even existed prior to the curse) be easily managed but would take a great deal of time to eradicate. Perhaps there would have been



sweat prior to the curse, but after the curse it was much worse. But the worst part of the curse was the spiritual and physical consequences of death. Spiritual began immediately after sin for God made it very clear that the very day he ate he would surely die” *“for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die”* (Gen. 2:17). Physical death also began but did not reach its end until life ceased on earth.

*Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it:’ Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you ,And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.”* Gen. 3:17-19

Paul dealt with both of these deaths. Spiritual death is clearly the Paul’s subject in Romans 5. It was only because all men sinned that this death passed to all men. Since all die physically, but not all sin, before they die(infants) the Spirit speaks of spiritual death. Physical death is the obvious topic in 1 Corinthians 15. This death came by man(Adam) but will be undone by Jesus. Jesus literal resurrection was the *firstfruits* and Jesus literal death(he did not die spiritually!) was what was undone. So will ours!

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —* Rom. 5:12-13

*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.* 1 Cor. 15:20-23

## Adam & Eve - 2 - The Creation

One of the most important functions of the material creation is to anchor man to God. It's beauty, complexity and function all proclaim His love and generosity, His wisdom and intelligence, His power and craftsmanship. All day and every day, we see the utter impossibility of a creation without a Creator!

*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. Ps. 19:1-2*

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and divine nature, so that they are without excuse Rom. 1:20*

As we listen to the "heavens declare the glory of God," "uttering speech" and "revealing knowledge," we also see "His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature," in "the things that are made." If we are watching and listening carefully, our faith and trust, our love and devotion, and our gratitude and appreciation continue to grow. The evidence is overwhelming! With multitudes of intricate and complex elements in the creation truly, only "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God!' (Ps. 14:1). As Paul reminded us, we all have glad memories of good times that testify of God's love and faithfulness.

*Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts 14:17-18*

So the material creation is working much like the mirror we use day by day. It reflects God's everlasting power and divine nature into our hearts just as the flat piece of glass with silver on the back reflects our own face to us. In the creation we see a reflection of God's glory in His handiwork. The creation also reflects His love and goodness. The rain and the fruitful seasons that fill our hearts with food and gladness also testify and reflect Him into our consciousness. With all of this reflecting into our hearts *day unto day* and *night unto night*, we are without excuse if we do not seek after *groped for* and *find* Him. The true reality of the material creation is that *in Him we live and move and have our being*.

*God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, Acts 17:24-28*

Yet as we read and say amen to all these things, lurking in the background are the exceptions we have either endured or watched others endure. The droughts and famines, war and pestilence, ravages of a tornado or hurricane, terminal illness or a stillborn child. Not all our memories are happy and not everything we see reflects joy. There are wonderful things happening to evil and wicked people and there are terrible things happening to God's people. Even the prophets noted these things. Much of the book of Job discusses these blemishes or contradictions from the reflections of the material creation. One of the inspired songs was also written about this.

*Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. 2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. 3 For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. 4 For there are no pangs in their death, But their strength is firm. 5 They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like other men. 6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them like a garment. 7 Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. 8 They scoff and speak wickedly concerning oppression; They speak loftily. 9 They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. 10 Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full cup are drained by them. 11 And they say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?" 12 Behold, these are the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase in riches. 13 Surely I have cleansed my heart in vain, And washed my hands in innocence.*

14 For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. Ps. 73:1-14

In or own "Farther Along, we sing of these same questions:

*"Tempted and tried, we're oft made to wonder Why it should be thus all the day long;  
While there are others living about us, Never molested, though in the wrong  
Farther along we'll know more about it, Farther along we'll understand why;  
Cheer up, my brother, live in the sunshine, We'll understand it all by and by."*

The viciousness of the insect realm (creeping things), the predators, with their claws, teeth, stings and fangs. Where do we place all these things in our mirror of God as seen through the material creation? There are some serious questions we are often forced to answer. We preach the love of God and they ask about the horrors done in the material creation. They want us to explain the terrible things they have seen happen to their friends and family, and we need to have an answer to give them.

## **The Strengths and Weaknesses of Mirrors**

The reflection of most mirrors is so accurate, they are standard equipment in every home, restaurant and car. A quick glance and we have a nearly exact replica of ourselves, or what is behind us. Although we "know" we are only looking at a piece of glass with silver placed on its back, our eyes can focus on the clear image reflected within, and we "see" the image instead of the glass. We can see ourselves as clearly in a flawless full length mirror, as we can someone else who is standing next to the mirror.

This is exactly how God designed the material creation. When we look at it we see "*His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature*" reflected into our heart. The replica is so close to the reality that every one is "*without excuse*" if they do not see it. The sunset, the scent and beauty of the flower, the glory of the renewal of spring and the plenty of the harvest in the fall. All of these things and multitudes more reflect to us an accurate image of our Creator. But not everything is a true reflection.

This is the fundamental limitation of **all** mirrors. While precisely formed glass and a perfect placement of silver creates a "*mirror*" image of what is placed before it, any blemish or curvature in the glass, will distort the image it reflects. Such a mirror is humorous in a fun house. A convex or concave glass will make us look tall and thin or short and fat. Scratches or faded silver will make it much more difficult to see a full and clear image of our face. When we see these imperfections we immediately recognize that it is the mirror that is flawed, not us. With every flaw and blemish, the true reality of any image becomes more and more distorted.

That is exactly what we are dealing with in the material creation. There are scratches and blemishes in the material creation that do not accurately reflect God's image. Much of the terrible suffering, anguish and sorrow that exist in this creation do not accurately reflect God's image.

The problem is simple. The creation has been cursed and that curse has created blemishes and curvatures in physics, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, etc. These must be seen and discounted in order to see God as He really is.

## **The Creation BEFORE the Curse: EVERYTHING was VERY GOOD(Gen 1:31)**

Only the creation, as it came pristine and new from the hands of God was a perfect mirror, reflecting His love, power majesty and glory. As God assessed the function and beauty, complexity and immensity, He expressed His satisfaction that all was *very good*.

*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. Gen. 1:31*

The Hebrew word "*good*" was selected to convey a very special quality of the creation. It is much more extensive in meaning and usage in Scripture than our own English term.

*tob...* This word, in its various forms, is used in a very extensive sense: of that which is **good to the senses, agreeable, pleasant, and desirable; beautiful, fair...** of **that which is useful, fit, and suitable...** it is also applied to **things prosperous and abundant**; to **happiness and joyfulness; to advantage and pleasure...** (Wilson OT Word studies 197)

The heavens and the earth as God planned and created them were perfect. They were good to the senses, pleasant, and fair. A place of prosperity and abundance where happiness and joy abounded. The Holy Spirit added “**very**” to stress that the word “**good**” was being understood in its highest possible intensity. It was an *exceedingly* pleasant world. It was *superlatively* suitable. It was beautiful and fair to the *highest degree possible*. It met God’s high and perfect expectations. At that moment, before man had violated God’s law and brought the curse of death into the creation, it was exactly the good and perfect gift James described.

*Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. James 1:16-17*

Everything God gives is good in the sense of the word above. It is perfect in its ability to bring the blessing and contentment it was designed for. For every need God created within us, He created a good and perfect manner in which we might fulfill that need. There was no variation or shifting shadow at that time. Every time we fulfilled a need with what God created we found the same perfect enjoyment, the same dominion that led everything to conclude exactly as we planned. God gave us His image and likeness and He gave us a good and perfect home in which to live our eternal life. Prior to the curse, God gave Adam and Eve dominion over every living thing that moved on the earth, along with all the fish in the sea and all the birds of the air.

*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Gen. 1:28*

No one but Adam and Eve ever saw this world. A world of total dominion and superlative good in every way and in everything. This was the world that fully reflected God’s everlasting power and divine nature with no blemish or flaw. It was the curse that changed everything!

## **The Creation AFTER the Curse: Vanity of Vanity; ALL IS VANITY**

*Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you ,And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” Gen. 3:17-19*

At that moment, God began to reveal to Adam the full consequences of his disobedience and the changes the curse would bring. Note that the ground was cursed “*for your sake,*” (ASV; NKJV) or “*because of you*” (NASB; ESV). It was not what God created! It was not what God had wanted or intended. It was because of what Adam did that the ground is now cursed. The curse was a consequence of sin, not a design flaw in God’s plan or a blemish in the reflection of love and goodness.

All the grief and sorrow along with the hopeless and bitterness of death reflects nothing upon God. God did not create death. Death was not part of God’s plan. The material creation was designed and created so that death was impossible. God gave them dominion over all the earth. Everything that now causes did could not result in death then. We can’t comprehend how this could be, but it is true. The only thing that had the power of death over man was the fruit on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil! Neither spiritual death or the physical death that would follow with it was possible until Adam ate that fruit.

*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned — Rom. 5:12-13*

The Holy Spirit is specific and precise here. It was “*through **one** man*” that “*sin entered the world*”

and it was through that one sin that spiritual death gained entrance into the world. Spiritual “*death spread to all men,*” only because “*all sinned.*” Thus the Holy Spirit revealed that one man(Adam) and Adam alone brought both sin and spiritual death into the world. Before Adam sinned there was no spiritual death and there could be no spiritual death! It was not created by God. It could not be created by God, nor could God be its agency. Sin can only be created by the one who allows himself to be tempted and God doesn’t even have anything to do with the temptation, let alone sin.

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:13-15*

What about physical death? How did physical death come into being? In explaining the true meaning and power of Christ’s resurrection, the Holy Spirit revealed that it was by man(Adam) that physical death came.

*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Cor. 15:20-22*

The Spirit unequivocally states that it was “*by man came death.*” It is impossible for this to be anything but the death where we return to dust because He contrasted this death with Christ’s physical resurrection. When it states “*Christ is risen from the dead*” it can only mean physical death because Christ never sinned and thus never died spiritually! The Holy Spirit leaves no ambiguity. It was by man (Adam) that physical death came. It was man’s agency and actions that brought physical death into this creation. God did not create death. Death came with the curse. Man is responsible for his own mortality and all the suffering and impotence that came with it. We go back to the dust not because the creation is “*very good*” but because the creation is *cursed*. God did not bring death into the world, Adam did! So all the horrible and terrible things that lead to death(sickness, accidents, old age) do not reflect on God. If we have any doubt about our immortality prior to the curse, listen to God describe the possibility of immortality even after Adam sinned:

*Then the Lord God said, “Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” — 23 therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So He drove out the man; and He placed cherubim at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life. Gen. 3:22-24*

God sent Adam out of the garden and placed a cherubim and a flaming sword to guard the way. God did not want Adam to eat from the tree of life, because if he did, even then, he would have lived forever. Since man could freely eat of all the trees except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life was in the midst of the garden, Adam had full access to that tree before he sinned. Death came through Adam. There was no death and with the tree of life in the garden, there could be no death. If Adam had not sinned he would have remained immortal. Nothing could have killed him because God did not put the mechanism of death into His “*very good*” creation.

## **A BEFORE and AFTER snapshot**

When God finished the creation, He saw everything was very good. Yet in Ecclesiastes, It was described in very different terms. Although both describe the function and working of the creation, they are completely incompatible. They teach exactly the opposite things.

*“Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.” Gen. 1:31*

*“Vanity of vanities,” says the Preacher; “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity.” 3 What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun? Ecc. 1:2-3*

In Genesis, before the curse we have inspired testimony that all was very good. But in Ecclesiastes, the creation is again accurately assessed and Holy Spirit again gives inspired testimony through

Solomon that it was no longer “*very good*.” Instead it was now “*vanity of vanities*.” The word vanity is defined:

“*hebel... used of that which soon vanishes away, like vapor, or a bubble; to breathe, to become vain, insignificant and worthless.... c... a breath, breathing, e.g. of air, a gentle breeze, Isa 57:13;... so very often of anything evanescent, transient, frail. Hence the signification vanity, something vain, empty, fruitless; specially of idols...*” (Wilson 465)

By repeating “vanity,” a second time “*vanity of vanities*” He makes this word a superlative, strengthening it and forcing us to see it at the fullest possible extent of meaning. All the creation was then described as: Empty of all emptiness, fruitless of all fruitlessness, worthless of all worthlessness, meaningless of all meaninglessness, vapor of all vapors. All was empty, vain, fruitless and worthless. While “all” was very good in the beginning, “all” is vanity of vanities now. The same Hebrew term was used in both places.

*kol* or (Jer. 33:8) *kowl*- “all, the whole” a) “all, the whole of” b) “any, each, every, anything” c) “totality, everything” ... (Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon, 3605)

The entire creation was very good as it was given to Adam and Eve. The “*whole, totality and everything*” was very good. *Any* one thing and their sum (*everything*) was very good. But after the curse, the entire creation was “*vanity of vanities*.” The “*whole, totality and everything*” was “*vanity of vanities*.” *Any* one thing and their sum (*everything*) was “*vanity of vanities*.” The Holy Spirit then allowed Solomon to wax eloquent on the explanation of the extent and cause of this vanity.

*I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I set my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; this burdensome task God has given to the sons of man, by which they may be exercised. 14 I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all is vanity and grasping for the wind. Eccl. 1:12-14*

He also allowed Solomon to describe how he used his own wisdom. This does not minimize his inspiration. It revealed the extent of God’s promise to Solomon that he would be the wisest of men.

*behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. 1 Kings 3:12-13*

*And God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. 30 Thus Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt. ... Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. 1 Kings 4:29-30, 33*

Why does Solomon reveal he used all the wisdom God had given him. Though he was the wisest man in all the earth, surely his inspiration was more important than his wisdom. There are times when the Holy Spirit allowed the wisdom of the writer to enter into the discussion (Lk 1:1-4). When the Holy Spirit allowed someone to use their own wisdom in this way, He was emphasizing that anyone with wisdom could see that this was true. You don’t have to be inspired to see it. It is not an exclusive truth of revelation and Scripture. It is obvious and it is everywhere! Both human wisdom and inspiration both conclude it. Thus God verified what all can see. As Solomon assessed and the Spirit validated, “*all that was done under heaven*” was a “*burdensome task*.” Once again He describes the extent with the same word “all.” Just as all was very good, now “all that is done under heaven” is “*burdensome*.”

*ra`* - as an adjective: 1) bad, evil a) bad, disagreeable, malignant b) bad, unpleasant, evil (giving pain, unhappiness, misery) c) evil, displeasing d) bad (used of its kind, land, water, etc.) e) bad (used of value) f) worse than, worst (comparison) g) sad, unhappy h) evil (hurtful) l) bad, unkind (vicious in disposition) j) bad, evil, wicked (ethically) ... 2) evil, distress, misery, injury, calamity a) evil, distress, adversity b) evil, injury, wrong c) evil (ethical) as a feminine noun: 3) evil, misery, distress, injury a) evil, misery, distress b) evil, injury, wrong c) evil (ethical) (BDB; 7451)

**All** that man must deal with under heaven is now a burden. What was good and agreeable can now be bad and disagreeable. There is evil, distress, misery, and injury in everything. This is the

interesting paradox of life. One time someone goes on a drive and all is well, another time he is killed by another driver or by a mistake that crashes the car. One time a farmer sows his seed and is blessed with a harvest and the next time a drought or hailstorm destroys all his labor and leaves him with nothing. A woman has a healthy baby and the next time she is pregnant, the baby dies, or she and the baby die, or the child is injured at birth. There just isn't anything consistent. One time it may be good and the next time it may be bad. There is so much of this inconsistency everywhere that the only possible conclusion both from human wisdom and from the Scripture is that it is a burdensome task:

God's pronouncement in Genesis  
**ALL IS VERY GOOD**  
 agreeable, pleasant, and desirable  
 beautiful, and fair  
 useful, fit, and suitable  
 prosperous and abundant  
 happiness and joyfulness  
 advantage and pleasure  
**BEFORE THE CURSE**  
 Dominion

Solomon's inspired conclusion  
**ALL IS BURDENSOME**  
 bad, evil, and malignant  
 disagreeable and unpleasant  
 hurtful and displeasing  
 sad, unhappy and unkind  
 giving pain and unhappiness,  
 distress, misery, calamity and wrong  
**AFTER THE CURSE**  
 Vanity of vanities

This helps us to visualize the drastic changes after the curse. As in the beginning of the book (Ecc 1:1-3), Solomon again saw that "*all the works that are done under the sun,*" were "*vanity.*" He now adds that the frustration of taking dominion after the curse was like trying to catch the wind with a butterfly net or some other device. Just as no one can catch the wind, no one can subdue or control "*all the works done under the sun,*" What then happened to the dominion God clearly gave in the beginning?

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; **let them have dominion** over the **fish of the sea**, over the **birds of the air**, and over the cattle, **over all the earth** and **over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.**" 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; **fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion** over the **fish of the sea**, over the **birds of the air**, and over **every living thing that moves on the earth.**" Gen. 1:26-28*

There is no way to harmonize the creation before the curse and the one we live in after the curse. The world God created was good, pleasant, agreeable and enjoyable. The world God cursed is bad, evil, disagreeable, and miserable. There is no accord. In the one, we had dominion and the power to subdue **all** things while in the other **all** can be empty and futile. One time everything works out and the next time it is a disaster. After the curse, our efforts at dominion are like trying to catch wind.

Solomon's final inspired comment explained the exact nature of the curse. It revealed what God did to the earth to force it to bring forth thorns and thistles. What He did to the soil to require the man's sweat to work it. It also explained why the pain in conception was multiplied for Eve. It explains every blemish, every curvature, every reason why the material creation does not always accurately reflect God.

*What is crooked cannot be made straight, And what is lacking cannot be numbered. Eccl. 1:15*

God changed what was *very good* into "*what is crooked.*" He took that which was good and wholesome and made it into "*what is lacking.*" "*Crooked*" is used of things "bent," "perverted" and "subverted."

*avath-* to be bent, to be crooked, to bend, to make crooked, to pervert a) (Piel) 1) to make crooked, to falsify, to pervert, to subvert 2) to bend, to make crooked. (Brown-Driver-Briggs; Hebrew Lexicon; 5791)

After man's sin, God bent, perverted and made crooked all the things that are no longer "very good." Everything that is no longer "*what it ought to be*" was made that way through the curse. There are many things in this creation that could clearly work better if we could "*straighten them out.*" But they cannot be "*made straight.*" What God changed, man cannot undo. Though God originally gave us the dominion to subdue, He took it away in the curse and we no longer have enough dominion to fix what is crooked.

Not only did God make things crooked, He also took some vital element away so they now lack perfection and goodness. Solomon found so many things with something lacking that he had to finally conclude: They "*cannot be numbered!*"

*checrown-* to diminish, cut short; to be diminished, to fail, to be wanting; to want, to be in want, to suffer need... adj. wanting, destitute of... deficiency...poverty..." (Wilson, OT Word Studies p 472; 2642)

In God's curse, no one can even count the number of things that were "*diminished,*" "*cut short,*" and are now "*wanting.*" They are innumerable!

So we find ourselves living in a creation where multitudes of things are crooked or lacking. Even those who have had their souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus and now live in God's spiritual creation of the church are subjected to this same futility(vanity). Although we can look forward to being delivered from this bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. We do not have it yet. Though spiritually redeemed, we must wait for the redemption of our body.

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. Rom. 8:18-23*

Until that day comes both the spiritual creation of the church and the "*the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.*" The curse is still working and we who are spiritually redeemed still live in a burdensome world of vanity. So we wait, "*who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*"

## **A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words!**

God only gave us a limited glimpse into the interaction of all living things before the curse. But it gives us a good picture of how life interacted differently prior to the curse. At that time all living things ate green herbs for food.

*And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Gen. 1:29-30*

Think about that for a moment. There were no predators! No beast, bird, or anything that creeps on the earth in which there is life was a predator. Everything ate vegetation. All the beasts(including lions, tigers, leopards, bears, cougars, coyotes etc.) ate vegetation. All birds(even hawks buzzards, eagles, vultures, etc.) ate vegetation. All that creeps on the earth(reptiles [including serpents], insects [spiders, mosquitoes, scorpions, etc]; even the viruses and bacteria that cause illness and death)! Everything with life ate herbs for food! Imagine the difference this would make! How peaceful and lovely this world was!



All animals ate grass like a cow or goat. All birds ate fruit. All insects ate herbs like the grasshopper or caterpillar. All bacteria and virus's ate herbs. The cruelty of the predator, the subtle devices that lead to the death of insects and animals are the *crooked* and *lacking* things described by Solomon, not the *very good* things God saw before the curse.

Everything that does not reflect clearly God's goodness and love is only reflecting the curse. Everything that has left a sour taste in our mouth, or that is brutal, sinister, ugly and evil. All the things that we have wept over and led us to question in anguish. Everything that we can't answer and don't understand. They are the blemishes of the curse. Curvatures and twisting of a mirror that do not reflect an accurate picture.

Yet Solomon speaks of multitudes of things. Much more than just the small snapshot we are given above. Things in physics and chemistry, things in anatomy and physiology, all the sciences, all branches of learning. All has been made to reflect the terrible changes that were occurring and would continue to occur in our own heart. Man brings so much of his own suffering upon himself and upon others. The curse of sin within man's soul is now reflected in the curse of sin in the material creation. Multitudes of things have been made crooked within our own hearts.

*Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes."*  
Eccl. 7:29

So we wait along with the whole creation for better things.

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ... we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Rom. 8:18-19; 23-25*

*Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 12 looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:11-13*

# Cain & Abel

## Introduction/Background

Studying the story of Cain and Abel reveals joy and victory right beside bitterness and loss. Their lives are the only glimpse we have into the lives of Adam and Eve immediately after they were banished from the garden of Eden. That God respected Abel and his offering is the first indication in Scripture that man could still please God and that grace and mercy would be offered. Even after sin it was still possible to speak with and have a relationship with God, though banished from the garden and under the curse.

But there is a much darker side to this brief glance into their lives. It is deeply disturbing to see how quickly mankind degenerated into terrible moral and spiritual chaos. Truly, the lie of the serpent that “*your eyes will be open and you will be like God knowing good and evil*” must have been bitter to Eve as they were forced to bury a son after such a short time on the earth. Abel was the first to go back to the dust, and it was far sooner than anyone would have dreamed or imagined.

More bitter still was Cain’s departure. His newfound knowledge of evil led him to forever walk away from the presence of Jehovah(Gen. 4:16). He went on to become the father a corrupt race of men who had no care or concern for God(Gen. 4:16-24). Even after many generations, their pollution and corruption did not recede. Even after the “*sons of God*”(the descendants of Seth - Gen. 5) saw “*the daughters of men*”(Cain’s offspring), there was no restoration of elevation of their spirituality or morality. After intermarriage it went all the other way. The corruption and violence that started with Cain soon filled the entire earth. Ultimately what Cain started here led to the destruction of all that breathed.

*Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. ...5 Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the Lord said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” 8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. ...11 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. .... 13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. .... And behold, I Myself am bringing flood waters on the earth, to destroy from under heaven all flesh in which is the breath of life; everything that is on the earth shall die. Gen. 6:1-2; 6:5-8; 11-14; 17-18*

There is so much we would like to know about Adam and Eve after they left the garden of Eden, but God only revealed the birth of three sons. First Cain, then Abel and later Seth. We are told that Adam was 130 when Seth was born(Gen 4:3). Since Seth was born after these events, all that is recorded about Cain and Abel and these sacrifices occurred in a period of less than 130 years.

## In the Process of Time...

*Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the Lord.” 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Gen. 4:1-2*

During this 130 year period before the birth of Seth, Eve had Cain and Abel(and since Cain had a wife and Eve “*was the mother of all living*” (Gen. 3:20), there was at least one more daughter). Everything we would like to know about the excitement of birth and whatever hopes and dreams Eve had for her sons are passed over in silence. All we know about life during this period is summed up in their occupations. Cain was a farmer and Abel was a shepherd. This is all the Holy Spirit revealed before the story opens:

*And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the Lord. 4 Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. Gen. 4:3-4*

After being expelled from the garden, their lives unfolded and the time here recorded arrived. There was nothing special or significant, it simply came about in the course of their lives. Nothing is said about this being the first time. Just that as life passed day by day, a day came when these events occurred. It was nothing special. There is no record of any special days during the lives of the Patriarchs. We are not even told if Adam and Eve were present to witness these events. Only that Cain and Abel brought offerings to the Lord as they felt the need at God's direction, and that and as life moved, the time came when they brought these offerings. Cain brought fruit from the ground he had tilled and Abel brought his offering from the firstlings of the flock he shepherded. Both brought offerings from the sweat of their own brow in their chosen occupation. But something went wrong.

*And the Lord respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. Gen. 4:4-5*

These are the only details we have about this event. Cain failed in some way to gain God's respect for his offering. Although many have tried to figure out the exact problem, there is not enough information to be certain. God is no respecter of persons and never shows partiality, so there is no doubt the problem centered on Cain and his offering. But the specific nature of the problem is not revealed. We can eliminate some of the possibilities. David spoke of offering things that cost him nothing, but Cain and Abel both brought their offering from the sweat of their brow, so there was no difference in the work and value of the offerings.

*Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy it for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings with that which costs me nothing." 1Chr. 21:24-25*

Others have suggested Cain should not have brought a vegetable offering. Yet God later asked Israel for grain offerings.

*When anyone offers a grain offering to the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put frankincense on it. 2 He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn it as a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the Lord. Lev. 2:1-3*

We can speculate concerning motives or quality, but there isn't enough information given to find the specific cause and "*the secret things belong unto God*" (Deut. 29:29). As God looked upon the efforts of both young men, He manifested approval and disapproval, showed regard and no regard, took note and ignored. There was something different in the offerings and it was enough to force our God of mercy and grace to reject Cain's. They knew the outcome immediately and tangibly. God's respect of Abel's offering, led him to respect Abel by some form of obvious acceptance. God also made it clear to Cain that He did not respect his efforts or offering. Although we don't know exactly how God manifested these feelings we have other examples to consider. God showed , regard and respect for Solomon's sacrifices in the Temple and Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel. Everyone knew immediately that God was pleased.

*When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. 2 And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord had filled the Lord's house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever." 2 Chron. 7:1-3*

*And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that You are the Lord God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again." 38 Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, "The Lord, He is God! The Lord, He is God!" 1 Kings 18:36-39*

God may have done this or something else, but however God did it, it honored Abel and left Cain empty and angry. Clearly something was very wrong with what Cain had done. It is also obvious from Cain's response that he did not expect what happened to occur. Anger is generally a sign that what occurred did not turn out as we expected or wanted it to turn out.

*And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. Gen. 4:5*

There was also a change in his countenance (literally his face) and more specifically the look on his face:

*panim ... In its most basic meaning, this noun refers to the "face" of something. First, it refers to the "face" of a human being: "And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him..." Gen. 17:3. In a more specific application, the word represents the *look on one's face*, or one's "*countenance*": "And Cain was very [angry], and his countenance fell" Gen. 4:5. (Vine's Expository Dictionary OT:6440)*

So Cain had an expression on his face that manifested expectation and anticipation as the sacrifices were being assessed by God. He might have shown hope or determination, perhaps concern and fear, maybe even excitement, but when God showed his offering no respect, this look on his face (countenance) fell. Something happening within Cain's heart now showed on his face and also in the emotion of his anger. Did he pout or frown? Did he feel grief and sorrow that flashed into anger? Was it deep disappointment that created the anger? Did he know in his heart that he had been pushing the envelop of God's commands, yet expected God to be pleased with his ingenuity? It could have been any of these things. His expectations or hopes were not met. What he wanted to happen did not happen and he was sullen and angry.

Yet in God's question there is a subtle hint that he should have known and really did know.

*So the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it." Gen. 4:6-7*

Both God's question of "*why are you angry*" and His counsel of "*If you do well*" was a clear condemnation of the sacrifice. Cain had not done well, he should have known that he was not doing well, and he should not have been angry but penitent. After all, the purpose of offerings is to please God, not to please ourselves. When God was not pleased it should have been obvious to Cain that he needed to do something to fix it. God had given clear instructions and Cain had done something that could still be easily fixed, "*if you do well!*" Cain had ignored something in God's instructions either by leaving something out or adding something in. Yet it was not too late to fix the problem Cain had created. Without any further explanation God simply told him he still could still do well. God would then accept his offering in the same manner He did Abel's and Cain's countenance would then be lifted up. Since God gave no further instructions, He expected Cain to know exactly what he needed to do to change the outcome.

The additional warning revealed God's insight into the grave danger confronting Cain. His fallen countenance and anger presented two clear but opposite directions on the path he was walking. He could turn around, retrace his steps by repenting and turn back to the path of God and "*do well.*" If he did not turn, he would "*do not do well,*" and it would lead him right to the doorway of sin. Both the desire (lust) he felt at that moment (anger) and the enticement of further alienation from God had come together at this moment.

*But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. James 1:14-15*

If Cain did not rule over this desire (anger and frustration), sin would use it as an opportunity to enter and rule over him. He must rule over the desire, or sin would rule him. Instead of turning back to the right path in repentance (*if you do well*), his anger would lead him to compound his problem. God warned him to take the necessary steps to control it before it controlled him and led him further away.

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

Cain did not listen to God. He did not “do well.” He did not fix the offering. He did not control his desires. The conversation with God was finished. But later, he continued this conversation with Abel. Nothing is revealed here about the nature of the discussion. Only that it so displeased Cain that he rose up against Abel and killed him.

The final conversation between God and Cain showed no remorse for the rejected offering or the murder. He simply went on with his life forgetting both his brother and his God(Gen. 4:9-16).

The brevity of the account leaves us with many questions that cannot be answered here. What did Cain do wrong in his offering? Why did his countenance fall? Why did he become so angry? What were he and Abel talking about? Why did Cain kill Abel? God does not answer any of these questions in Genesis. But a careful reading of the rest of the Scriptures will answer most of them.

## **Later Scripture**

Cain and Abel are mentioned several times by Jesus and by the Holy Spirit through His apostles and prophets. The attitudes of Abel’s heart are described and commended. Cain’s reasons for killing Abel are also explained. Jude tells us that Cain’s actions forged a path or way that many others have followed and by looking at all the principles involved we can have a very clear idea of exactly what occurred.

### **Cain’s Works were Evil**

*In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that we should love one another, 12 not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous. 1Jn. 3:10-12*

Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the apostle John adds many details to the account in Genesis. First, He reveals that in Cain and Abel we witness the very beginnings of the children of God and the children of the devil. Cain did not practice righteousness and did not love his brother. He was a child of the devil and of the wicked one. NOTE: Cain did not become a child of the devil after he killed Abel. He was a child of the devil and was practicing evil even as he was bringing the sacrifice. All the effort involved(works) in that offering were evil. God showed no respect to Cain or his offering because Cain’s works were evil and he was of his father the devil.

John also enlightens us to the reason God respected Abel and his offering. While Cain’s works were evil, Abel’s were righteous. What Abel brought was exactly right. It met all God’s specifications for what is just and right. Abel’s good works created a strong contrast. His good actions showed even more clearly the evil that Cain had done. In accepting Abel, God showed Cain what was right and gave him a chance to fix his error. Instead of repenting and doing well, Cain chose to destroy the source of his shame. He killed his brother for this one reason. **Because** his works were evil and Abel’s works were righteous.

### **Abel was Acting as a Prophet**

Jesus as the Word, who was with God and was God, was present with God when these sacrifices were brought(Jn. 1:1-3, 14). He knew exactly what had occurred and why God had treated the offerings differently. He also witnessed that final conversation between Abel and Cain in the field. Jesus revealed that this murder was the very first act of persecution. Abel was the first prophet and his blood was shed by an evil person(Cain) because he had preached the truth.

*Therefore the wisdom of God also said, ‘I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they will kill and persecute,’ 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation. Lk. 11:49-51*

While in that field, Abel was speaking to Cain not just as his brother and a righteous man, but as

a prophet of God. As with all other prophets, it was no longer Abel who was speaking. It was the Holy Spirit moving Abel to speak His words using Abel's mouth.

*knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2Pet. 1:20-21*

Abel's words were not "by the will of man." He was "moved by the Holy Spirit." The conversation centered on Cain's offering. Abel was preaching to Cain, warning him of the evil of what he had done and seeking to get him to repent and "do well." He was God's spokesman "reproving, rebuking and exhorting" and Cain stopped him by killing him. Cain's murder was the first act of persecution and Abel's death was the blood of the first prophet shed from the foundation of the world.

## **The Essential Difference in the Sacrifice**

*By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks. Heb. 11:4:*

The Holy Spirit revealed in Hebrews that there was only one essential difference between Abel's offering and Cain's. That one difference made Abel's sacrifice "more excellent" than Cain's (which also made Cain's works evil and Abel's righteous).

*pleion... the comparative of *polus* ... is used (a) as an adjective, "greater, more," ... (b) as a noun, ...Mt. 12:41, "a greater (than Jonah)"; v. 42, "a greater (than Solomon)"; in these instances the neuter *pleion*, "something greater" ... "more, greater," ... is translated "more excellent" in Heb. 11:4, of Abel's sacrifice ..." (Vine's NT:4119)*

When comparing sacrifices, Abel's had something greater. It was this that led God to respect Abel and his offering and held him back from respecting Cain and his offering. Cain's offering was missing something. Abel had an ingredient in his sacrifice that made it greater and more excellent. What was missing? What did Abel have that Cain lacked?

*"By faith Abel offered..."*

Abel had faith when he offered his sacrifice and Cain did not. It was by this faith that "he obtained witness that he was righteous." It was faith that led God to respect Abel and his offering and it was a lack of faith that led God to reject Cain and his offering. It was faith that made Abel's offering righteous and it was a lack of faith that made Cain's offering evil. Faith made Abel's offering righteous in the same way that as Abraham "believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:6). When God speaks and His people trust and act on His word, it is always accounted as righteousness. Abel's sacrifice, offered by faith, was well received, and even though Abel is dead, through this accepted sacrifice, "he being dead still speaks." So the account of Cain and Abel is very important and holds a powerful doctrinal significance to us today. Abel is still speaking. He is one of "the great cloud of witnesses." The story of his sacrifice, made by faith, needs to be heard as we enter our own worship and bring our own offerings. Every time we offer our worship to God we should hear Abel's whisper, "be sure to make this offering by faith just like I did." So in our singing, praying, communion, offering and hearing God's word we must be using our faith exactly as Abel did with his.

## **Faith comes by Hearing**

Since faith is the only difference between the two sacrifices, it is critical to understand exactly what must be done to offer something by faith. Faith is trust in God, so offering by faith means offering in such a way that we show our faith in God. How did Abel do this?

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17*

Without God's word there is no faith. Before anything can be done by faith, God first has to speak. Only after God speaks and reveals His will can we hear exactly what He is saying, fully trust it and completely submit with awe and reverence. So now we know! The difference between Abel and

Cain was in how they heard and responded to God's Word. God told them both exactly what He wanted them to do. Abel brought his offering exactly as God asked him to bring it. The reverent manner in which Abel offered it and the complete trust and full submission manifested in the offering itself is what faith brought.

Cain was also told exactly what God wanted him to do. He too had the opportunity to reveal to God his full trust and submission by the manner in which he complied. But what Abel heard, Cain ignored. Abel did all God said and no more, Cain did less than God said or did more. It is that simple. The universal principle of all worship and all offerings we bring to God is set forth here. If we are listening to Abel carefully, then "*through it he being dead still speaks.*" Those of us who are listening to Abel's testimony and following it's example are therefore as righteous as Abel was. Listen to Jesus condemning those who are walking the way of Cain.

*These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."* Mt. 15:8-9

This is exactly what Cain did. He drew near to God with his mouth, but his heart was far from God. His offering was vain because it came from his own heart. It was a commandment of men. Cain twisted or changed the commandment just enough that it was no longer the Word of God he followed. He was following a command, but it was one he had modified and changed into a command of man instead of from God. There was no "faith coming by hearing the Word of God" in Cain.

Since faith only comes by hearing what God says, Abel heard what God said and did it exactly. He added nothing to the command and dared take nothing away. God gave clear instructions. Abel heard, trusted and brought the sacrifice exactly as God asked him. He fulfilled the principle set forth in Proverbs.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and depart from evil.* Pr. 3:5-7

Abel trusted in the Lord with all his heart and allowed God to direct his path. This led him to offer a more excellent sacrifice. Unfortunately, Cain made the mistake of leaning on his own understanding. Cain did not acknowledge God in all his ways. Because he was "wise in his own eyes," He brought a sacrifice that had been tainted with his own understanding and God refused to accept it.

## The Way of Cain

*I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. ... 11 Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.* Jude 3-4

In contending earnestly for the faith, each Christian must learn to recognize and reject "*certain men*" who "*have crept in unnoticed, ungodly men.*" They can be identified because "*long ago*" they "*were marked out for this condemnation.*" Jude pronounced a "*Woe to them! For they have gone **in the way of Cain**...*" Can't get much simpler than that. Cain is an example of ungodly men. He is one of those God used to "*long ago mark out*" all who follow a similar path. Cain forged a path for ungodly men to follow and many today are following that path. His works were both "*evil*" (1Jn. 3:10), and "*ungodly*" (Jude 3). They are now a template for those who "*contend for the faith*" to identify any today who "*have crept in unnoticed.*" Cain's offering is the exact opposite of "*contending for the faith.*" His offering contends against faith and leads all who follow him away from faith. This is why his works were evil! Anyone imitating him today is both evil and ungodly. So just as Abel's sacrifice still speaks today so also Cain's works still speak today!

**Abel**

Genesis 4:1-8

- *brought firstlings of the flock*
- *God respected Abel **and** His offering*

1Jn. 3:10-12

- *the children of God are manifest*

Lk. 11:49-51

- *the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foundation of the world*
- *from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah*

Heb. 11:4:

- *By faith Abel offered to God*
- *a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,*
- *through which obtained witness: He was righteous God testifying of his gifts;*
- *Through it he being dead still speaks.*
- *Faith comes by hearing God's Word*

**Abel**

Of God

Respectfully Heard God's Word

Sacrifice Holy

Righteous

1<sup>st</sup> Prophet

Sacrificed(Worshipped) by Faith

More Excellent Sacrifice

He being dead still speaks

**Cain**

Gen 4:1-8

- *brought fruit of ground*
- *God did not respect Cain **and** his offering.*
- *Cain was very angry, his countenance fell.*
- *"Why are you angry/countenance fallen?"*
- *If you do well: accepted?*
- *If not well sin lies at the door. rule over it."*

1Jn. 3:10-12

- *the children of the devil are manifest:*
- *does not practice righteousness is not of God,*
- *nor is he who does not love his brother.*
- *Cain was of the wicked one; murdered his brother Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.*

Jude 3, 11

- *certain men crept in unnoticed,*
- *long ago were marked out for this condemnation,*
- *Woe to them!*
- *For they have gone in the way of Cain,*

**Cain**

Of the Devil

Rejected God's Word

Sacrifice Profane(Nadab/Abihu Lev. 10:1-3)

Evil

1<sup>st</sup> Persecutor

Sacrificed(Worshipped) without Faith

Rejected Sacrifice

The Way of Cain



## **Foundation of all Worship**

Jesus revealed the foundation of all worship God is seeking for us to bring Him. As we carefully consider these words it becomes obvious that Jesus is saying exactly the same thing as Abel who *“through it he being dead still speaks.”*

*But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” Jn. 4:23-24*

God has always sought worshipers who worship in spirit and truth. Clearly this is what Abel was doing since God respected his worship (offering). There is a direct parallel between offering in truth and offering by faith. Remember, faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Truth is also the word of God. *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth”* (Jn. 17:17-18). God’s word is truth and faith comes by hearing the word of God. So the faith that comes by hearing the word of God is also the truth of God’s word.

When God revealed the truth to Abel, he was a genuine worshiper and his offering in spirit and truth. God sought Abel to be His worshiper and respected him for it. Abel’s offering was more excellent than Cain’s because it was *“by faith,”* and he was considered a genuine worshiper because it was in spirit and truth.

Cain did not believe the word of God so he did not follow it. He rejected the truth when he refused to trust God and follow His instructions exactly. All today who reject the truth or ignore God’s instructions travel the same path Cain first walked. God has marked out these people to give us an important template. Anyone who refuses to worship God in spirit and truth and to fully submit to His instructions in simple trusting faith is not following Jesus on the narrow way that leads to life but is walking the broad way, *“the way of Cain.”*

*“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mt. 7:13-14*

## **Those who followed Cain**

### **Nadab and Abihu**

*Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them. 2 So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, “This is what the Lord spoke, saying: ‘By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; And before all the people I must be glorified.’” So Aaron held his peace. Lev. 10:1-3*

By offering a fire that God had not commanded them they offered profane or strange fire. It was therefore a *“command of men”* and was vain. In principle, it was identical to what Cain offered. It was not from God’s word and they did not have faith when they offered it. They were told how to offer the sacrifice and they did it differently. When Moses saw what happened, he knew immediately what had occurred. He told Aaron that Nadab and Abihu had treated God in a disrespectful manner. They had not treated him as God and had not glorified him by holding His commands in awe and reverence. God had given them the truth, but they ignored His word. God responded immediately revealing He was offended and angered at their sin. This is exactly what Cain did with his offering and what God implied when He said *“if you do well.”*

### **King Saul**

King Saul also followed the way of Cain. Saul had ignored God’s command to *“go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”* (1Sam. 15:3). He thought he

could honor God more fully by sparing *“the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God”* (1Sam. 15:15), but God saw it differently: *“I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments”* (1Sam. 15:11). Saul thought it would make God happy, pleased and honored by adding his own ideas to God’s command. He thus modified God’s word. What he did openly violated *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding”* and *“Do not be wise in your own eyes.”* Saul did not *“trust in the LORD,”* but did *“lean on his own understanding.”* Through the entire conversation, Samuel could not get Saul to see this truth because he was *“wise in his own eyes.”* Samuel’s final words of warning could have also been the same words Abel used to speak to Cain.

*So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.” 1 Sam. 15:22-23*

Though Saul (and Cain) expected God to be pleased with their improvisation or modification, Samuel’s simple question lays everything bare. Could God be pleased with an offering or sacrifice that ignores His commands? Could God ever accept an offering that was not in full submission and truth (in faith)? The answer is that *“to obey is better”* than any sacrifice. No matter how ingenious, anyone who offers a sacrifice that ignores or modifies a command of the Lord is only manifesting their rebellion in their worship. If they then refuse to listen when godly men warn them, they are being stubborn. All that pleases God requires that we *“obey”* and *“heed.”* What God saw in Saul (and earlier in Cain) was *“you have rejected the word of the Lord,”*

## **Uzzah’s Death**

Before the decision was made to move the ark of God, David discussed his plans with *“the captains of thousands and of hundreds, even with every leader.”* No one found any problem (1Chr. 13:1-4). When the day came, *“they carried the ark of God upon a new cart.”* No objections were raised. Yet when the oxen stumbled *“the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God.”* (1Chr. 13:6-10). At first, *“David became angry because of the Lord’s outbreak against Uzza.”* He could not understand why God would do such a thing. After a time of reflection and study he saw the error. *“Then David said, No one may carry the ark of God but the Levites.”* He saw that they had made the same mistake as Cain and Nadab and Abihu. *“God made an outburst on us, for we did not seek Him according to the ordinance.”* 14 *So the priests and the Levites consecrated themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel. 15 And the sons of the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders, with the poles thereon as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord”* (1Chr. 15:2, 13-15).

David read in the Law of Moses that God had commanded the Levites to carry the ark (Num. 4:15). It was an obscure command and had been forgotten. No one had thought to *“seek him according to the ordinance!”* They had not offered this by faith. They had violated a command, and even though they were unaware of it, God saw it exactly as He saw the way of Cain and thus He did not respect them or their sacrifices.

## **Conclusion**

These are but a few of the multitudes who have strayed into way of Cain. Those today who see God’s worship as a means to manifest their own creativity and wisdom are doomed to failure. To obey and heed is what God desires. He seeks genuine worshipers who will worship in spirit and truth following His instructions exactly. He wants more excellent sacrifices offered in faith that comes by hearing, respecting and trusting the word of God. Abel is still whispering to us today. *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don’t lean on your own understanding.”* Don’t walk on the path of Cain.

Worship is for God. It is the time we draw near to Him to honor, glorify and regard Him as holy and sacred. It is the time to submit, obey and heed. It is not the time for us to *“say, ‘My, how tiresome*

*it is! And you disdainfully sniff at it," says the Lord of hosts" (Mal.1:13)* Yet many who follow Cain are saying these very things today. They are weary of the five acts of worship. Bored with singing and making melody in their hearts they desire instrument accompaniment. Tired of listening to men as they pray and preach, some long for the voice of a woman. Weary of hearing only the word of God, and untouched by the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, they want more and different. Those with itching ears, seeking for teachers after their own lusts are simply ignoring the words of Abel and chomping at the bit to follow the way of Cain. Just like Cain did to Abel, anyone who points this out today is "worthy of death." They may not kill, but they will scoff, scorn and reject the wisdom of God.

# Enoch

## **Introduction:**

One can only wonder how Adam and Eve grieved over the loss of Abel and the terrible burden of anguish that Cain had become a murderer, been cursed by God, and had left the presence of Jehovah. Yet when all seemed so bleak, the chapter ends with the birth of another son. Eve's own words revealed her understanding that Seth would be another seed instead of Abel.

*And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26 And as for Seth, to him also a son was born; and he named him Enosh. Then men began to call on the name of the LORD. Gen. 4:25-26*

Eve knew God would not bring the promised seed(Gen. 3:15) to bruise the head of the serpent through Cain. She rightfully saw in Seth "*another seed instead of Abel.*" Seth did not disappoint them. As he grew to manhood, married and had his own son, Enosh, "*men began to call on the name of the LORD.*" If we use Abram as our example, then to "*call on the name of the LORD*" is only done after an altar is built. At that time, no one could "*call on the name of the LORD*" without an altar. The altar was their means of both worship and sacrifice for sin(Job 1:5).

*And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there **he built an altar** to the LORD and **called on the name of the LORD.** Gen.12:8-9*

*And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to **the place of the altar** which he had made there at first. And there **Abram called on the name of the LORD.** Gen. 13:3-4*

*So he **built an altar** there and **called on the name of the LORD**, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well. Gen. 26:25*

*So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly. Job 1:5*

The genealogies of Adam's sons through Seth are recorded in Genesis 5. They flow from one to another with only two details. God first revealed how old each man was when he began to have children. After this God recorded the age of each one when he died as shown in the chart below.

1	Adam	lived	930 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:3-5</u>
2	Seth	lived	912 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:6-8</u>
3	Enosh	lived	905 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:9-11</u>
4	Kenan	lived	910 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:12-14</u>
5	Mahalel	lived	895 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:15-17</u>
6	Jared	lived	962 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:18-20</u>
7	Enoch	Walked with God	365 years ... he was not; God took him.	<u>Gen 5:21-24</u>
8	Methuselah	lived	969 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:25-27</u>
9	Lamech	lived	777 years ... and he died	<u>Gen 5:28-31</u>

A few trends emerge as we examine these ages. First, all but three lived to be more than 900 years old and all but one lived and then died. Enoch did not die! Every other man lived and then died. Thus God wanted it understood that Enoch stood out! Enoch was different. Unlike the others who merely lived, Enoch walked with God for three hundred years. Second, at the age of 365 years, long before the death of all but Adam, God took Enoch.

*Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch walked with*

God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him. Gen. 5:21-24

## **Enoch Walked with God**

While the other patriarchs lived full lives and then died, Enoch lived only a short time, but the short life ended in reward, not punishment. His life was different from the others, and that difference is summed up with “Enoch walked with God.” Since this is the only thing separating them, it is important to define and understand how God defines it. God said it best in the book of Amos.

*Can two walk together, unless they are agreed? Amos 3:3*

Think about this important truth. The obvious answer is no! Two people cannot possibly walk together unless they both have the same destination in mind. Unless two people have agreed to travel to the same destination they cannot walk together. When one person is heading South and another North, they cannot walk together because one of them must travel further and further away from where they want to be. God has a destination in His heart and He will walk with every man and woman who is also seeking to end their life at that specific place.

That is exactly what Enoch did. Because he wanted to walk with God, he made it his aim to find out exactly where God was on every topic, doctrine, moral activity, etc. After he found out exactly where God was on all these things, Enoch walked there with Him. God has created this path for all men. Jesus described it as the way which leads to life. It is not an easy path. It is a difficult way, but it is the path Enoch chose.

*“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. Mt. 7:13-14*

*Thus says the Lord: “Stand in the ways and see, And ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’ Jer. 6:15*

The difference between living and walking with God centers on the destination and the path. Enoch was not the only one to make this choice. Scripture reveals that both Noah and Abram also walked with God. God also encouraged Israel to walk with him by keeping His commands and ordinances.

*This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. **Noah walked with God.** Gen. 6:9*

*When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, “I am Almighty God; **walk before Me and be blameless.** 2 And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.” Gen. 17:1-3*

*3 If you **walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,** ...11 I will set My tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you 12 **I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people...** 14 ‘But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, 15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, ... .. 21 ‘Then, **if you walk contrary to Me,** and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. ... 23 ‘And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, **but walk contrary to Me,** ... 27 ‘And after all this, **if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, 28 then I also will walk contrary to you in fury;** and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. Lev. 26:3; 11-12; 14; 21;23; 27-28*

*“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, **to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments of the Lord** and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Deut. 10:12-14*

*“Therefore you shall be careful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; **you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God***

***has commanded you***, that you may live and that it may be well with you, and that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess. Deut 5:32-33

“For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do — to love the LORD your God, ***to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him*** — Deut 11:22-23

He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and ***to walk humbly with your God?*** Micah 6:8

Enoch was the first one God described in this manner and the first one openly rewarded for it. Since this is the only thing God revealed about Enoch, It is very important we see it so we can follow too.

### **By Faith Enoch was Taken Away**

*By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, “and was not found, because God had taken him;” for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. Heb 11:5-6*

God gave these additional details to the account for those who are Christians. First, like Abel in the previous verse, his walk was described as “*by faith*” and since “*faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*” (Rom. 10:17), it is again emphasized that Enoch’s walk with God was an obedient walk of faith in all God’s commands and ways. Thus his attitude is mirrored in Proverbs:

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. 7 Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and depart from evil. Pr. 3:5-8*

What else can anyone do once they understand how different God is from us? We need His guidance.

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. Isa. 55:8-9*

As Abel before him, Enoch also trusted in the LORD with all his heart. Enoch did not lean on his own understanding, but allowed God to direct his paths. He was not wise in his own eyes. Instead he feared and respected the LORD and departed from evil through continual repentance. It was in this way that Enoch walked with God, and it is in this way that God testified Enoch was pleasing to Him.

One of the key points in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter of Hebrews is the variety of ways God has allowed man to “*measure out his faith*” (Rom. 12:3-8). All those listed had exactly the same saving faith by which each of them was “reckoned righteous” (Rom 4:3-9; 21-25); But as God’s needs changed, their faith was focused in different ways. Abel offered, Enoch was taken, Noah built an ark, Abraham left his country, and etc. God’s need at the time of Enoch was that Enoch should be “*taken away*,” and “*was not found*.” What purpose did this serve? So everyone could see that “*before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God!*” Who are the people who would hear this testimony? From the passage in Hebrews it is evident that all Christians are among these people. God wanted us to know that man could so conduct himself in his walk with God that God still wants him to be with Him.

But it wasn’t just for the Christians who read Hebrews. Since Enoch “*was not found*” it is inferred that they looked for him. The fact that in taking him, God testified that “*before he was taken*” “*He pleased God*,” also infers they heard this testimony. As Abel and Abraham, Enoch filled an important purpose in God’s plan. The power behind the testimony: Enoch did not “*see death*.” God did something special. He was “*taken away*,” which literally means “*to transfer*” or “*transpose*” from one place to another.

*“metatithemi... to transpose(two things, one of which is put in place of the other... 1. to transfer... without mention of the place, it being well known to the readers... 2. to change...” (Thayer, p. 406; 3346)*

*metathesis ... 1. a transfer: from one place to another ... the translation of a person to heaven, Heb.*

11:5....” (Thayer, p. 406; 3331)

The only template we have of how this might have occurred is when God took Elijah.

*Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. 2Kings 2:11*

Again, as Enoch, after he was taken, they looked for Elijah but could not find him either.

*Then they said to him, “Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, lest perhaps the Spirit of the Lord has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley.” And he said, “You shall not send anyone.” 17 But when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, “Send them!” Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. 18 And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, “Did I not say to you, ‘Do not go?’” 2 Kings 2:16-18*

It may have been in this manner, or in a totally different way, God does not tell us. One moment Enoch was walking with God on earth and the next he was *transferred, transposed, and taken up* to heaven. Did he go to paradise with Abel? Did he go right into the presence of God as the angels. Arguments can be made pro and con. Since Jesus had not yet died, sins were not yet forgiven (Rom. 4:24-26) so it is doubtful that Enoch would have gone directly into God’s presence. But no one can really know.

### He was Not Found

They looked for him and they could not find him. He was missed and they knew something had happened. Look at the chart below and think about the implications.

The chart lists the patriarchs mentioned in the fifth chapter of Genesis. Each column lists their age at the birth of each descendant. The bottom of each column lists the age of each patriarch at his death and the passage where it is recorded in Genesis.

At the bottom of the first column we see that Adam lived to be 930. He lived long enough to know all his descendants except Noah. Adam did not die until Enoch was 308 years old. What impact did Adam’s death have on them? It was a grim reminder of sin’s curse and the loss of the tree of life. Yet 57 years after Adam’s death, when Enoch was only 365 years old, God took him. Everyone but Adam and Noah (who would not be born for another 69 years), were still alive when Enoch was taken!

Adam	Seth	Enosh	Cainan	Mahalel	Jared	Enoch	Methusaleh	Lamech	Noah
130									
235	105	born							
325	195	90	born						
395	265	160	70	born					
460	330	225	135	65	born				
622	492	387	297	227	162	born			
687	557	452	362	292	227	65	born		
874	744	639	549	479	414	252	187	born	
-57	857	752	662	592	527	365	300	113	-69
930	912	905	910	895	962	365	969	777	
5:1-5	5:6-7	5:9-11	5:12-14	5:15-17	5:18-20	5:21-23	5:25-27	5:28-31	

What a powerful message! It was just the thing to give great emphasis to the close walk Enoch had with God! God did this translation in such a way that *“he obtained the witness that before his being taken up he was pleasing to God.”* (NASB)

Hence just fifty-seven years after Adam’s death God revealed His grace and mercy. He

circumvented the penalty for sin, revealing more about the promise He had given to Adam and Eve that He would fix what they had done(Gen. 3:15). Through this translation, God proved beyond doubt it was still His intention to allow those who loved Him to be with Him in heaven. Enoch became proof that God would keep His promises to those who walk with him.

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. Heb. 11:13-16*

Enoch's translation, along with whatever other promises God gave at that time led these early saints to stop just living in this world and instead walk with God as strangers and pilgrims. They were seeking the homeland Enoch had been taken to wait for. At least as early as Abram, Isaac and Jacob, they knew of "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:8-10*

God is not ashamed to be called their God when they are like Enoch and are walking with Him in humble and submissive faith. Enoch was the first of many. God sees the death of each saint in exactly the same way.

*Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints. Ps. 116:15*

*Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, And the Lord listened and heard them; So a book of remembrance was written before Him For those who fear the Lord And who meditate on His name. 17 "They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them As a man spares his own son who serves him." Mal. 3:16-17*

## **Enoch the Prophet**

Along with their faith(Heb 11:4-5), another similarity between Enoch and Abel was their role as God's prophets. Abel was a prophet when he spoke to Cain(Lk. 11:49-51), and Jude revealed a prophecy Enoch made before he was taken.

*Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14-15*

Who are "these men" that Enoch's prophecy now revealed and warned against? Jude began this letter warning against men who had secretly crept into the midst of those who were "walking with God." and sought to use their influence for evil. It was because of these men that Enoch prophesied against that made it necessary for each of us to always contend earnestly for the faith.

*I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. 4 For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Jude 3-4*

Enoch's prophesy was against all who "creep in unnoticed," "who long ago were marked out," "ungodly men" "who turn the grace of our God into lewdness," "deny the only Lord God," and deny "our Lord Jesus Christ." These are also the men "who have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah" (Jude 11).

Although Enoch was taken 669 years before the flood(Noah was born 69 years after Enoch was translated and was 600 years old when the flood began(Gen. 7:11)), there were already such men among the godly. The intermarriage would not be the first step. First they would secretly come into



their midst seeking to influence them to evil. Enoch prophesied against these and all such men. God has been planning to execute judgement on men such as this all the way back in the times of Enoch. They have been marked out all the way back to Cain. Balaam and Korah were such men. Enoch warns that none of them will escape judgment and condemnation. God will convict, then punish all the ungodly both for their ungodly deeds and the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken.

# Noah

## Introduction

Like most of God's servants, Noah's life is linked to the events that occurred during his lifetime. During the days of Noah, there were drastic changes in the standards of the world. Changes that forced God to pass judgment on their wickedness and send the flood. Because Noah's conduct was so different from that of the wicked, God gave Noah grace and allowed him to build the ark to save himself and his family. God saw these events as being so important for future generations, that He dedicated four full chapters of Genesis. There is more material about the flood than there is about the creation and time spent in the garden. This material can be organized and looked at under the following headings:

1. Events Leading to Corruption(6:1-7; 11-13)	2. Noah's Character (6:8-11).
3. Preparing the Ark(6:12-22).	4. Duration and Extent of the Flood(7:11-24)
5. Entering a Changed World; (8:1-22; 9:1-7)	6. Covenant of Rainbow(9:8-17)

## 1. Events Leading to Corruption(Gen 6:1-7; 11-13).

The account begins with one specific event that led to the flood. It all began when men began multiplying on the face of the earth.

*Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. Gen. 6:1-2*

	Patriarch	Age	Time	Children	Couples	Children	Couples
1	Adam	130	<b>130</b>	10	5	6	3
2	Seth	105	<b>235</b>	50	25	30	15
3	Enosh	90	<b>325</b>	250	125	150	75
4	Cainan	70	<b>395</b>	1250	625	750	375
5	Mahalalel	65	<b>460</b>	6250	3125	3750	1875
6	Jared	162	<b>622</b>	31250	15625	18750	9375
7	Enoch	65	<b>687</b>	156250	78125	93750	46875
8	Methusaleh	187	<b>874</b>	781250	390625	468750	234375
9	Lamech	182	<b>1056</b>	3906250	1953125	2343750	1171875
10	Noah	500	<b>1556</b>	19531250	9765625	11718750	5859375

Have you ever wondered just how many people there were at this time? The chart below offers some estimates that give us some idea of the possibilities. The first three columns give the number of

generations, the name of each Patriarch, and his age at the birth of his first son. The 4<sup>th</sup> column adds up the ages showing there were about 1550 years from Adam to Noah. If each patriarch had 10 children(5<sup>th</sup> column) then there would have been five couples in the first generation(6<sup>th</sup> column). If that number continued until Noah, there would have been almost 20 million people on the earth.

Even if they had 6 children (7<sup>th</sup> column) in their 900 year life span there would have been over 10 million Remember, Abraham was multiplied to over 650,000 men alone in only 430 years(Gal. 4:17)!

Of similar interest are questions about their advancements into technology, arts, science, energy and exploration. They had been commanded to multiply, to subdue the earth, and take dominion(Gen 1:26-28). With life spans of 900 years, it is difficult to imagine what they could have accomplished. Imagine if Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, or Albert Einstein had been given another 800 years to work. God gives only a small snapshot.

- ◆ After Cain left the presence of the LORD(only a man) he built a city named Enoch(Gen. 4:16-17).
- ◆ They developed tents and a nomadic culture(Gen. 4:20).
- ◆ They created musical instruments and music to play on them(Gen. 4:21).
- ◆ They created cutting instruments of brass and iron and some form of industry in which they were cutting things(Gen. 4:22). These things could have been wood, precious stones, gold, fabric or all of them and others as well. Job spoke of some of the accomplishments men were doing not long after the flood.

*Surely there is a mine for silver, And a place where gold is refined. 2 Iron is taken from the earth, And copper is smelted from ore. 3 Man puts an end to darkness, And searches every recess For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death. 4 He breaks open a shaft away from people; In places forgotten by feet They hang far away from men; They swing to and fro. 5 As for the earth, from it comes bread, But underneath it is turned up as by fire; 6 Its stones are the source of sapphires, And it contains gold dust. 7 That path no bird knows, Nor has the falcon's eye seen it. 8 The proud lions have not trodden it, Nor has the fierce lion passed over it. 9 He puts his hand on the flint; He overturns the mountains at the roots. 10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, And his eye sees every precious thing. 11 He dams up the streams from trickling; What is hidden he brings forth to light. Job 28:1-11*

It is evident from these words that the foolish images of cave men or savages are just foolish imagination. As is the silly notion that people today are smarter and more advanced than those who lived before us. We must never forget that man never really changes.

*That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which it may be said, "See, this is new"? It has already been in ancient times before us. 11 There is no remembrance of former things, Nor will there be any remembrance of things that are to come By those who will come after. Ecc. 1:9-11*

They had the same resources and opportunities to gain knowledge as we do today and lived far longer than we. It is foolish and arrogant to think we can do more today than they could then. Though it is now impossible to know the advancements they acquired because the flood destroyed everything and perhaps that was one of the reasons God destroyed the entire earth with a flood.

## **A. The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men**

*And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot Shem, Ham, and Japheth. 1 Now it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose. Gen. 5:32; 6:1-2*

The wording of this passage has led to many long discussions among Christians and Bible Scholars. All that is recorded in the remainder of Chapter Six, "came to pass" after "men" began to multiply on the face of the earth. Who are these "men?" At first glance, it appears to be all men. Yet there is clearly a distinction being made between two different groups of men. The first group of men had daughters, and the second group(sons of God) took them as wives. Who are the men who began to multiply on the face of the earth and had daughters? What group of men(sons of God) saw these daughters and made them their wives? The most logical and Scriptural explanation is set forth in the two distinct genealogies of Genesis 4-5. After Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah(stopped all relationship with God and becoming only a man), he began to have children(Gen. 4:16-24). These are the "sons of men," who were living out of the presence of Jehovah, thus living only as men. They did not recognize God, so they were only men and their daughters were born only to men.

After the birth of Seth, Men began to call upon the name of the LORD and the genealogy of Adam through Seth was recorded(Gen. 4:25-25; 5:1-31). These are clearly the sons of God above. They are the men who were born from Adam through Seth ending in Noah. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Luke traced all of these men back to Adam and then called them by the name "son of God."

**Sons of Men(4:16-24) Sons of God (5:1-31; Lk. 3:36-38)**

	God
1 Cain	1 Adam
2 Enoch	2 Seth
3 Irad;	3 Enosh
4 Mehujael,	4 Cainan
5 Methushael,	5 Mahalalel
6 Lamech.	6 Jared
7 Jabal/Jubal	7 Enoch
	8 Methusaleh
	9 Lamech
	10 Noah

*the son of Shem, the son of Noah, the son of Lamech, 37 the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel, the son of Cainan, 38 the son of Enosh, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God. Lk. 3:36-38*

In the first column is the genealogy of the *sons of men* through Cain. They were those with the daughters.

In the second column is the genealogy of the *sons of God* who took wives from the *sons of men*.

**a. They will Turn your Sons Away from Following Me**

The marriage of the “*sons of God*” and “*daughters of men*” is the only fact God revealed that brought the two groups together and led to a complete corruption of the entire human race. His later warning to Israel that the same thing would happen to them if they married the people of the land of Canaan adds weight to the conclusion that these are the groups under discussion and that this is the event that led to their corruption.

*Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. 4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. Deut. 7:3-5*

There really is no other scriptural or logical conclusion to be drawn. Chapter five ends with the genealogy up to Noah and no hint of such wickedness. It was these “*daughters of men*” who turned away the hearts of the “*sons of God*” leaving the world in total wickedness. God saw these changes with grief and sorrow.

*Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. 6 And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. 7 So the LORD said, “I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.” Gen. 6:5-7*

*The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. 12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. 13 And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Gen. 6:11-13*

The entire inhabited earth was affected by this union. No one but Noah was left. The superlatives here tell the tale for there is no exaggeration. These are the facts as God saw them.

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The wickedness of man was great in the earth.</li><li>2. Every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.</li><li>3. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.</li><li>4. All flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.</li><li>5. The earth is filled with violence through them.</li></ol> |
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There are several important things to be learned here. **First**, it is fraught with peril for a servant and child of God to choose an ungodly spouse. Solomon was a godly man who had spoken to God in a dream, been inspired by the Holy Spirit, and seen great miracles, yet his wives turned even his heart.

*But King Solomon loved many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the*

Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites — 2 from the nations of whom the Lord had said to the children of Israel, “You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.” Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his heart was not loyal to the Lord his God, as was the heart of his father David. 1Kings 11:1-5

**Second**, the depth of depravity revealed just how dark man’s heart can become. When “every intent” in the heart of a man is “only evil” and one thought follows another, and that evil is “continual” so that never is their a good thought or intent man has reached the furthest depths of evil.

### **b. All flesh had Corrupted their Way on the Earth.**

**Third**, not only was the inside of man’s heart rotten to the core, but the earth itself was corrupt(rotten). His deeds matched his heart. All the lusts of the flesh listed in the NT, all the lists of wickedness and ungodliness set forth throughout the Scriptures were being practiced. The term “flesh” is used in the same sense as Romans 6-8. These are the carnal and fleshly desires of man that enjoy fulfilment outside of God’s law. The more God’s law condemns it, the more pleasurable it become to the flesh. This part of man had corrupted itself. Using the same word, Moses warned Israel, that if they did not listen to God’s word the same corruption would happen to them.

*For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.” Deut. 31:29*

*And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way. Judg. 2:19*

It is quite possible and even probable that the things recorded in the first chapter of Romans is the same path these men and women took.

*Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. 26 For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. 28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; 29 being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, 30 backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; 32 who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them. Rom 1:24-32*

It would be a dark and dismal place indeed if fulfilling these terrible things were the only thoughts of every man continually.

### **c. The Earth was Filled with Violence**

**Fourth and finally**, the earth was filled with violence. Violence is a terrible violation of loving our neighbor and it is selected as a terrible example of the corruption of those in the earth.

*knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, **for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers**, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, 1 Tim 1:9-11*

*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20*

idolatry, sorcery, **hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders**, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

As we leave the wickedness that brought the flood remember the prophecy of Enoch who spoke these words over 500 years previously.

*Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Jude 14-15*

## **2. Noah's Character (Gen. 6:8-11).**

While the rest of the world was descending into wickedness, corruption and darkness and God was grieved over their thoughts and conduct, Noah was different.

*But Noah found favor in the eyes of Jehovah. 9 These are the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, (and) perfect in his generations: Noah walked with God. Gen 6:8-9*

Noah found favor because God saw him as a righteous man. As we saw earlier when discussing "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," it described God's perfect manner of treating others fairly, justly and honorably. What God does naturally, we are commanded to do through His law. The more closely we follow God's law, the more righteous we become. Noah sought to keep all of God's laws. While the rest of the world was becoming wicked and corrupt, Noah kept his moral integrity.

The second quality God saw in Noah: he was "perfect" (NKJV; ASV) or "blameless" (NASB; ESV).

*tamim OT:8549, "perfect; blameless; sincerity; entire; whole; complete; full." The 91 occurrences of this word are scattered throughout biblical literature ... Tamim means "complete," in the sense of the entire or whole thing: ... In several contexts the word has a wider background. When one is described by it, there is nothing in his outward activities or internal disposition that is odious to God; "...Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God" Gen 6:9. This word describes his entire relationship to God. (Vine's Expository Dictionary)*

*With the verb's fundamental idea of completeness, Samuel inquired of Jesse, "Are here all ... thy children?" (1 Sam 16:11). ... describing an entire day (Josh 10:13) or a whole, and therefore healthy, vine (Ezek 15:5). ... moves naturally toward that which is ethically sound, upright (Ps 19:14). The "perfect" decision, as made by lots, is the correct one (1 Sam 14:41). As made by men, it is the right one (Judg 9:16,19). Asaph praised the completeness or integrity of King David's heart (Ps 78:72). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament).*

The flaws God saw in everyone else were not present in Noah. He had not corrupted himself. His thoughts were not evil continually. No violence was found in him. There was "nothing in his outward activities or internal disposition that is odious to God." We see both his righteousness and blameless uprightness in how he carried out the commands of the Lord.

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

Noah did everything God commanded him to do exactly as he was commanded to do it. This not only made him righteous and blameless/perfect, but it also revealed the depth of his faith which is recorded in Hebrews 11.

*By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith. Heb. 11:7*

As we have already noted with Abel and Enoch, faith always comes by hearing God's Word (Rom. 10:17). When God warned him, he responded by doing "all that God commanded him." But with Noah we learn more about even more about what God is looking for. Noah's faith was in response to "being divinely warned." While some reading this only think of the ark and the flood, since no one could know if there would really be a flood, the truth is more complicated and comprehensive than

that.

## **Being Divinely Warned**

Every command and every truth in Scripture is a divine warning! The judgment of the flood was only a type of the judgment at the end of the world. Abel was also divinely warned that his actions would be judged, as was Enoch and as are we. The NT Scriptures are just as much a divine warning of things to come as Noah's was.

*For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, 6 by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. 7 But the heavens and the earth which are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . . 10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. 11 Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, 2 Peter 3:5-7; 10-12*

As they were warned of the flood, we are warned of fire. As they were warned to repent and enter the ark, we are warned to repent and be baptized. This type and antitype are clearly identified by Peter.

*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 21 There is also an antitype which now saves us — baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 1 Peter 3:18-22*

Taken literally, type and antitype are illustrated with an old standard typewriter with keys mechanically connected to rods that push a ribbon onto the paper and leave a mark. The mark left on the page is type and it was called a typewriter because you could quickly put type on a paper with it. If you gently push a single key and look at the edge you see the "antitype."

*"antitupos.... 1.... repelling a blow, striking back, echoing ... 2. Metaph....In the N.T. language antitupon ...1. A thing formed after some pattern... 2. A thing resembling another, its counterpart; something in the Messianic times which answer to the type..." (Thayer, 51; 499)*

The key that struck the blow always left a type or figure that resembled itself on the paper(typewriter) or metal(coin). The Holy Spirit used this term when He wanted to reveal how an event God did or revealed in the Old Testament is the type left on the page of a spiritual reality in heaven.

The Holy Place in the temple is a type and heaven is the antitype(Heb 9:23-24). The bronze serpent in the wilderness(type) and Jesus on the cross(antitype)(Jn. 3:14-15) and Jonah in the belly of the fish(type) and Jesus in the tomb(antitype)(Mt. 12:39-41) are also used in the same manner.

The relationship between type and antitype is in identity. Those who looked on the serpent lived and those who believe in Jesus will live. Jonah went into the belly but came out again, and Jesus went into the tomb and came out again.

This is exactly how baptism and Noah's ark are antitype and type. Just as the ark saved Noah, baptism now saves us. Just as all who passed through the water in the ark were saved, so now all who pass through water in baptism will be saved. Just as those who refused to enter the ark were lost so those who refuse to be baptized are lost. Just as they saved themselves from that crooked generation by building and entering the ark, so now we save ourselves from our crooked generation by being baptized. All commands are like this. We all face judgment and the word Jesus spoke will judge us in the last day if we do not accept it by faith by hearing and obeying.

*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him — the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. Jn. 12:48*

## **He Condemned the World**

This is another important concept that is often used in the Scriptures. By doing what God told him to do, Noah proved to the rest that they could have done it too. It was not too hard and it was not too complicated. By trusting God he took away all excuses others might have used. Jesus spoke of exactly how this will be done when He used Jonah and Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba.

*For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. 42 The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here. Mt. 12:40-42*

Noah also took away the final excuse they could have made. "How could we have known?" We just didn't know. But Noah was a preacher and the ark itself was a monument to the truth of his preaching.

*and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, one of eight people, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 2 Peter 2:5*

It is this preaching that Peter described in his previous letter when he spoke of the Spirit that preached while the ark was being prepared.

*but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, 20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. 1 Pet. 3:18-21*

Noah condemned the world because: 1. He built the ark which was a testimony of the coming judgment. 2. He was a preacher of righteousness. 3. He had the Spirit (was inspired) in this preaching for the Spirit himself was giving him the words and thus all was done perfectly.

## **He Became Heir of the Righteousness which is According to Faith**

Noah is the first patriarch given this specific designation, but this was not revealed to those under the Law. Only Christians receive this information. "The righteousness which is according to faith" is the theme of the book of Romans. After revealing that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23), The Holy Spirit showed that every servant of God who seeks to be justified and seen as righteous by God must do it the same way that Abraham did. Even in Genesis God revealed that Abraham was reckoned righteous because of his faith.

*And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Gen 15:6*

God used Abraham's faith to forgive him of all his sins. Once forgiven, his account had no sin left on it so he was accounted as a righteous man. It was not the way he obeyed all of God's commands that made Abraham righteous. It was the faith that led him to obey all the commands to the best of his ability. Once God saw that faith, he forgave him and consider him righteous.

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, Rom 4:1-5*

Abraham was not justified because of his deeds and works. He was a sinner like everyone else. He was justified by his faith. He too, as Noah, was an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith. Abraham is the template for all. As God justified Abraham, he also justified Noah, and he also justified us. That God accounted Abraham as righteous based upon his faith was not just for Abraham. It was also for all Christians.

*17 Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all ... 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to*



perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:17, 21-25

Abraham is the father of all who are righteous based upon their faith and submission to God's commands. Because Noah moved with godly fear and did all that God commanded him he was an "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." Because Abraham believed and trusted God when God made him a promise, he too was an "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith." In exactly the same way, when we believe that God raised Jesus from the dead after delivering us from our sins we too become an "heir of the righteousness which is according to faith."

### 3. Preparing the Ark(Gen. 6:12-22).

*Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15 And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it with lower, second, and third decks. Gen. 6:14-16*

From the information given above, many different drawings and images have been created. We don't know the exact length of a cubit, the thickness of the boards used, the configuration of the dimensions, and many other details. Some envision the ark like a ship and others like a chest or box. We don't really know exactly what gopher is and how big the tree actually grows. We don't know the technology Noah had at his disposal to cut the trees, form the wood and lift it into place. We don't know how it was fastened together or whether Noah hired others to help him build it or was expected to build it by himself. These are not important things, but without some of them it is difficult to create an image in our mind. So after we read the above, many of us will have totally different images.

A cubit is the span from the tip of the finger to the elbow. Since the average is about 18" or 1.5,' most encyclopedias translate the dimensions as 300 cubits(450 feet) long, 50 cubits(75') wide and 30 cubits(45') tall with three floors or stories of 10 cubits(15') each. But it could have been longer/shorter.

Those with the wisdom to figure these things out tell us the ark would contain about 1,400,000 cubic feet. It would take 150,000 board feet to build such an ark. After it was built it would have the same volume as a freight train with 522 standard livestock cars or 261 12' tall double semi trucks driving down the highway. Since we load about 240 sheep in a single boxcar, the ark could have held about 125,000 sheep. There are less than 18,000 known mammals, reptiles and amphibians living. Two of each would give 36,000. So the ark could easily do what God wanted it to do.

Not only was Noah told to build the ark, but also to gather enough food for all the animals and gather all the animals into the ark. Although many assume Noah had to go out and hunt for all the animals and bring them into the ark, the Scriptures also leave open the possibility that God did something to the animals that led them to come to Noah. First God tells Noah to bring them, but later states that they would come to him.

*19 And of **every living thing of all flesh YOU SHALL BRING** two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, **two of every kind WILL COME TO YOU** to keep them alive. ... 2 You shall take with you seven each of every clean animal, a male and his female; two each of animals that are unclean, a male and his female; 3 also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep the species alive on the face of all the earth. ... 7 So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, of animals that are unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 **two by two THEY WENT INTO THE ARK TO NOAH**, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. ... and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every sort. 15 **And THEY WENT INTO THE ARK TO NOAH, two by two, of all flesh** in which is the breath of life. 16 **So THOSE THAT ENTERED, male and***

**female of all flesh, WENT IN** as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in. Gen 6:19-20 ; 7:2-3; 7:7-9 7:13-16

#### **4. Duration and extent of the flood(Gen. 7:11-24).**

Noah's age is exactly pinpointed when the flood came. So also is exactly what occurred. The fountains of the deep were broken up, the windows of heaven were broken and all the water within them was pushed upward. Some also speculate there was more water in the atmosphere before the flood, that the polar ice caps were not yet extensive, but regardless of how God did it, all the water necessary to create such a flood existed and God used it to cover the entire earth.

*In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. 12 And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights. Gen 7:11-12*

Scripture is also specific that all the high mountains of the earth were covered. God made this happen and whether it was natural or supernatural is immaterial to us. Some scientists scoff that there is not enough water on the earth to do this. Yet nothing is impossible for God. Just like the creation and the final judgment, God could undo natural law if He chose to bring about His purpose.

*Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. Gen 7:17-20*

God also made clear that His purpose was met. All flesh died. Noah, his family, and all that were in the ark were all that was left alive.

*And all flesh died that moved on the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life, all that was on the dry land, died. 23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only Noah and those who were with him in the ark remained alive. Gen 7:21-23*

It took 40 days to cover the mountains and 150 days with them covered to accomplish God's plan.

*12 And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.... 24 And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days. Gen 7:12, 24*

The waters began receding, and the ark came to rest on Ararat in the 7<sup>th</sup> month and 17<sup>th</sup> day of the month, but it was not until the 601<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> month and 27<sup>th</sup> day of the month that they came out onto the land. That makes one year and 10 days for all to be accomplished in the flood.

*4 Then the ark rested in the **seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month**, on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth month, on the first day of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen. 6 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made. ... 13 And it came to pass in the **six hundred and first year**, in the first month, the first day of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14 And in the **second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month**, the earth was dried. 15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16 "Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. ... Gen 8:4-6; 8:13-16*

#### **5. Entering a Changed World; (Gen. 8:13-22; 9:1-7)**

After Noah left the ark, he made a sacrifice to God. As God witnessed the manner it was offered and what was in the heart of Noah as he offered it, God made a decision and a promise. As long as the earth remains, there would never be such a catastrophic event again.

*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. 21 And the Lord smelled a soothing aroma. Then the Lord said in His heart, "I will never again curse the ground for man's sake, although the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done. 22 "While the earth remains, Seedtime and harvest, Cold and heat, Winter and summer, And day and night Shall not*

cease." Gen 8:20-22

With this promise we don't have to worry about global warming, nuclear winter or any other man made catastrophe. As long as the earth continues, none of these things will occur. There will be seedtime and harvest. There will be cold and heat. There will be winter and summer. There will be day and night. None of these things will cease as long as the earth endures.

God then changed something very fundamental. In the initial creation, God had created all the animals and man to eat herbs.

*And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. 30 Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Gen 1:29-31*

After they leave the ark, God makes several changes to the relationship between Man and the animals. There was a change of attitude. Animals now feared and dreaded man. Man was now given further dominion over all things. Man is given the right to eat of all that lives. Just as God had given him green herbs, so also he now gives them all that lives. But God made it very clear that the eating of any animal could only be done when the blood was removed. It was unlawful for man to eat any animal that still possessed its blood. This is clearly God a very important command because it was given again in the Law of Moses and again in the law of Christ.

*And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. Gen 9:2-4*

*Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; 14 for it is the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off. Lev 17:13-14*

*Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, 20 but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. Acts 15:19-20*

His final warning concerned murder. Because man is created in the image of God, anything that sheds that blood is to be put to death. This blood is so precious that God will require it of every animal and every man who sheds it. The manner in which it will be required is stern. If an animal sheds man's blood then that animal's life is required. If a man sheds the blood of another man then that man's blood is required. Whenever a man dies at the hand of animal or man, the only way to cover the price of that shed blood is the life of the one who shed it.

*Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man's brother I will require the life of man. 6 "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man. Gen 9:5-6*

## **6. Covenant of Rainbow(9:8-17)**

God then made a covenant with Noah and all his future seed(every human being). He made a promise never to flood the earth and destroy all flesh in the manner He had just done. God then gave the rainbow as the sign of this covenant. Every time he sees the bow in the sky he remembers his promise and at the same time those of us who see that rainbow should also be reminded of this covenant. Although a rainbow contains great beauty in showing all its colors in bright splendor and warming our hearts, it must never stop only with its own glory. The real power of the rainbow is the covenant it represents. It is this covenant we should be teaching our children and it is the power of this covenant that should hold more awe to us than the rainbow itself. The bow reminds us that God has kept his promise all these years and will keep it to the end of time. It is tangible proof of the truth of the flood and of God's faithfulness ever since.

*And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. 10 And with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you. Of all that go out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. 11 And I will establish my covenant with you. Neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of the flood. Neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. 12 And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. 13 I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. 14 And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud, 15 And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh. And the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. Gen 9:9-15*

# Tower of Babel(Gen 10-11)

## The Descendants of Shem, Ham and Japheth(Gen 10:).

God created Adam and Eve in the beginning, and Eve is the mother of all living(Gen. 3:20). But after the flood all also trace back to Noah. As Peter noted, only eight souls were saved through water(1Pet. 3:20). Noah and his three sons, along with their wives were the only people to survive the flood(Gen. 3:18-19):

*Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. 19 These three were the sons of Noah, and from these the whole earth was populated.*

The final account in Noah's life had a powerful impact on the nations recorded in Genesis 10. In a moment of weakness, Noah became drunk, and the terrible consequences when one is no longer capable of sober judgment occurred. This is reason why drunkenness is a work of the flesh(Gal. 5:19-21). What could never happen while Noah was sober, became possible only because Noah was drunk with wine. While under the influence of alcohol, Noah was lying naked in his tent. The actions of Shem and Japheth reveal how Ham should have responded to his father's nakedness. They went backwards into the tent so they would not see anything(Gen. 9:22-23).

*And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.*

From the account and its consequences, Ham's initial glimpse had something ungodly attached to it. We don't know exactly what it was, but it led to a terrible curse from Noah that God honored.

*So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan; A servant of servants He shall be to his brethren." 26 And he said: "Blessed be the Lord, The God of Shem, And may Canaan be his servant. 27 May God enlarge Japheth, And may he dwell in the tents of Shem; And may Canaan be his servant." Gen. 9:24-27*

Because of the godly actions of Shem and Japheth, great blessings were promised to their posterity. But the evil wickedness of Ham brought down a curse upon his posterity. Although many things have been speculated about these blessings and curses on the subsequent history of the human race, they are not based on Scripture. All God revealed is the curse fell on the seven nations of Canaan. Some seek to trace the lineage of the three sons and then make general conclusions. They select events from history to prove their contentions. Yet they often must be selective. Egypt(of Ham) was a world power before it was punished due to its treatment of Israel. Was this actually a part of the curse of Ham? We can assume it was and make generalizations, but nowhere in Scripture does God make such applications. Although it may be true that God cursed all of Ham's posterity, we don't have Scripture to prove it so it is only human speculation. Since secret things belong only to God(Deut. 29:29), we are not wise to follow the lead of others who have made such assumptions. Other than Israel's relationship with the seven nations of Canaan, how the curse might have developed over the rest of Ham's offspring is God's secret.

## The Tower of Babel

Chapter Eleven opens with an event that changed the course of human history forever. At that time, the children of Noah's sons were multiplying, but were still together, working as one people. They all spoke the same language and were all moved by the same purpose and goal(Gen. 11:1-4).

*Now the whole earth had one language and one speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."*

As we carefully read this account, it is difficult to find the exact sin that led God to intervene. Some think it was a violation of the command to “*fill the earth.*” Others, that they sought to build something that manifested their pride. Perhaps they wanted a structure high enough that it could not be impacted by a flood. Yet the best answer seems to be: “*we just don’t know.*” When God came down, He identified the problem with these terms: “*the people are one,*” “*they all have one language,*” “*this is what they begin to do,*” and “*nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.*” This is the only explanation God gave and it is difficult to identify exactly what sins were being dealt with.

*But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the Lord said, “Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. Gen. 11:5-7*

Yet clearly something in their conduct or purpose led God to intervene and separate them.

*Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” 8 So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. Gen. 11:7-9*

God did two distinct things. First, He confused “*their language that they may not understand one another’s speech.*” Second, “*the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.*” Once again we must take these words and seek to fit them into the facts we know. There are nations all over the earth. Many date back 1,000’s of years before the birth of Christ. These nations not only speak different languages and live in different locations, but also have different skin color, eye color and facial features. Although all races came from Adam and Eve and again through Noah’s three sons, there are many differences between those living in China, Japan, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Each nation not only lives in a different place and speaks a different language, they also have different appearances.

Did all this happen at this moment? Did God scatter the Chinese, Japanese, Eskimos, Africans, Asians, and Indians, changing their facial and body features, giving them different languages, and putting them in their lands? It makes sense, but can we say with certainty? It is the most natural explanation. That at the tower of Babel, God changed languages, scattered all over the earth, changed skin color and facial features, etc. But all God actually revealed is:

*Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. Gen. 11:9*

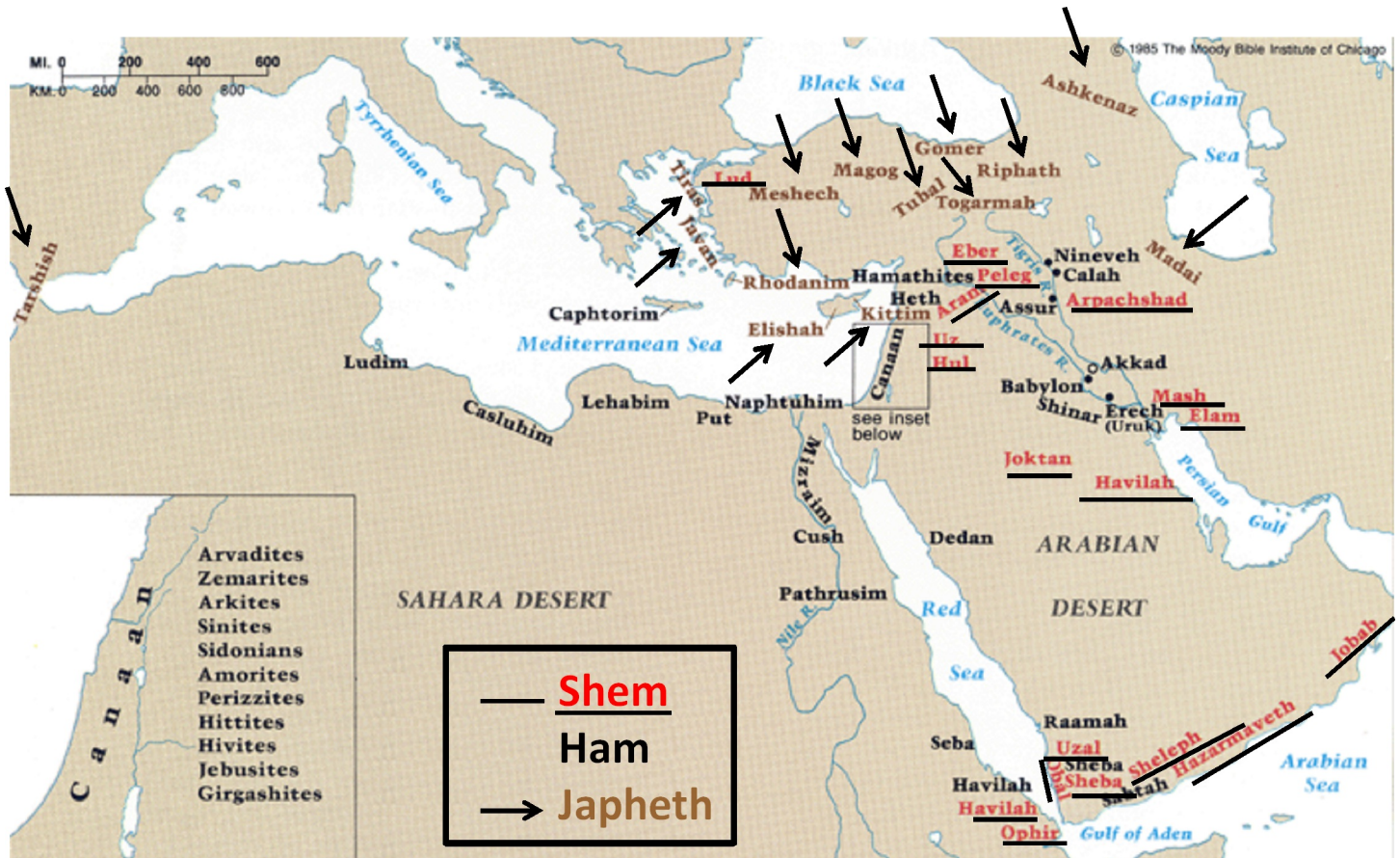


The map below gives a general description of the locations where the nations described in Genesis 10 were found. Yet even this map is only the result of taking what's revealed in Scripture, comparing it to what we know from history, and placing them in those locations. Their civilizations date back to this time and some sites have been found and identified. We could do the same with the Chinese, Japanese, Africans and those who settled on the other continents whose civilizations also date back to this time. This map is helpful only because it helps set the stage for the events in the rest of the Old Testament. Since the other continents are not mentioned anywhere in Scripture, we must simply place them into those secret things God has not chosen to reveal (Deut. 29:29).

Japheth (the Arrows) went primarily North and ultimately into Europe. Shem (underlined) primarily centrally located and ultimately East. Ham (bold text) primarily went South and ultimately into Africa.

### God Created and Rules over the Nations

All nations, races and cultures had their beginning with Noah and his three sons. No matter what language we speak or how different we look, we are all the same. Every man has an eternal soul and is created in the image and likeness of God. All men are brothers. First through Adam and Eve



and then through Noah and his three sons. Paul spoke of this in a sermon preached in Athens (Acts 17:26-27):

*And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;*

God made every nation from one blood (Noah). Those who believe that some are less than others are rejecting the truth. God made the nations He separated at Babel, and God has made every

nation since. God determined their pre-appointed times and He also determined their boundaries. God did this with a specific goal and purpose. He worked in all the nations so “*they should seek the Lord.*” He decided when they would begin and when they would end(*pre-appointed times*). He also chose how large and powerful they would become(*boundaries of their dwellings*). God did this so as many men and women as possible would “*grope for Him and find Him.*” Once we grasp this, many of the things written in the Prophets become clearer. We can also understand what is happening in our world today.

God and not man determines when a nation begins and when it ends. God and not man decides how large or small a nation becomes. There is “*no authority*” in existence “*except from God*” and the “*authorities that do exist are appointed by God.*”

*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. Rom. 13:1-3*

God has complete control over all nations. “*He rules over the nations*” and “*rules in the kingdom of men.*” He gives the rule and power to whomever He wishes. All of this is done to convert as many as possible, to save as many as possible, to allow as many as possible to find Him.

*For the kingdom is the Lord’s, And He rules over the nations. Ps. 22:28*

*‘This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.’ Dan. 4:17*

From these and many other passages there is no doubt God holds total control over nations. From Babel to the end of time, God decided when a nation would grow and become strong. God decided when a nation would weaken or fall.

## **As each Man, so each Nation is Judged by its Choices**

Yet God, in justice, righteousness, and mercy did not make these decisions without man’s free will. Just as our own judgment will be decided by our free will and choices(2Cor. 5:10), so also each nation is also given the same rights and privileges. God’s words to Abraham confirm that once a nation is given its land, only their own iniquity and wickedness can forfeit the gift.

*Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Gen. 15:13-16*

Though God promised Abraham his children would become a great nation and live in Canaan, it could not be done until it was just and honorable. Those given the land had not yet reached a level of iniquity necessary to be removed. Until that time came, God allowed Egypt to enslave Israel and afflict them. But when the iniquity was *complete* God would both judge and punish Egypt and dispossess Canaan.

God made it very clear what was used to judge Egypt and the seven nations of Canaan. He warned Israel they must not follow “*the doings of Egypt or Canaan.*” The “*ordinances*” of those nations(incest, fornication, adultery, murder of infants, homosexuality, bestiality- Lev 18:6-23) were abominations. The “*land was defiled and vomits*” those practicing these things from its midst. Israel was warned that even they must not do these things “*lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you.*” These are universal commands given for all time.

*According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. 5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live*



by them: I am the Lord. .... 'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. 25 For the land is defiled; therefore I visit the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land vomits out its inhabitants. 26 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations, either any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Lev. 18:3-5; 24-29

Beginning with the flood, God revealed there was a level of wickedness and evil that He would not tolerate. Even though God promised He would never destroy all mankind again, He has continued to do so on a national basis. When Sodom and Gomorrah reached a level of sin similar to the seven nations of Canaan, God destroyed them and used them as an example for all who would live after (even us)!

*And the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave," Gen. 18:20-21*

*as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jude 7*

Any people possessing land have a code of conduct to uphold. The land remains theirs until they violate that code. Then the land vomits them out. This happened again and again in the history of Israel and the nations around them. God used nations (Gentiles) to punish Israel throughout the Judges and Kings. In mercy, He also used plagues, famines, and droughts to lead them to repent before it was too late.

*I gave you cleanness of teeth in all your cities. And lack of bread in all your places; Yet you have not returned to Me, Says the Lord. 7 I also withheld rain from you, When there were still three months to the harvest. I made it rain on one city, I withheld rain from another city.... Yet you have not returned to Me... 9 I blasted you with blight and mildew. ... Your vineyards, Your fig trees, And your olive trees, The locust devoured them; Yet you have not returned to Me, ... 10 I sent among you a plague after the manner of Egypt; ... Yet you have not returned to Me,... 11 I overthrew some of you, As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah ... Yet you have not returned to Me, ... 12 Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel; Because I will do this to you, Prepare to meet your God, O Israel! Amos 4:6-12*

He finally used Assyria to destroy the ten tribes and Babylon to destroy Jerusalem and take Israel captive for seventy years.

God sent Jonah to Nineveh to warn them to repent or the land would vomit them out. After repentance God relented. God revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in a dream that after Babylon reached that level of iniquity, the Medo-Persians would conquer and replace, then came Greece, and finally Rome (Dan. 2:36-43; 8:20-22;). God summed all this up for Jeremiah and for us at the potter's wheel (Jer. 18:1-10):

*The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the Lord. "Look, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it, 8 if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.*

## **Conclusion**

God rules in the kingdoms of men and gives authority and power to whomever He wills. Jesus is

now ruling over all nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:1-9; Rev. 2:27; 12:5; 19:5). From the beginning until the end, nothing has changed. God *“made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings.”* So it was then and so it is today. The reasons the land vomited out the Canaanites in the days of Joshua, and vomited Israel/Judah in the days of Assyria and Babylon are still causing the land to vomit out inhabitants today! The principles of the *“handwriting on the wall”* that God showed the king of Babylon are still true today.

*5 In the same hour the fingers of a man’s hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. ...24 Then the fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written. 25 “And this is the inscription that was written: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. 26 This is the interpretation of each word. Mene: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; 27 Tekel: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; 28 Peres: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.” Dan. 5:5, 24-29*

All nations days are numbered based on their conduct. They are always being weighed in the balance revealed in Leviticus. When the iniquity is full, a kingdom will be divided and the land will vomit out its people. Think of the words of Habakkuk and how they resemble our own feelings today.

*O Lord, how long shall I cry, And You will not hear? Even cry out to You, “Violence!” And You will not save. 3 Why do You show me iniquity, And cause me to see trouble? For plundering and violence are before me; There is strife, and contention arises. 4 Therefore the law is powerless, And justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; Therefore perverse judgment proceeds. Hab. 1:2-4*

God’s answer should make us sober and reflective. He was raising up Babylon to remove Israel.

*Look among the nations and watch — Be utterly astounded! For I will work a work in your days Which you would not believe, though it were told you. 6 For indeed I am raising up the Chaldeans, A bitter and hasty nation Which marches through the breadth of the earth, To possess dwelling places that are not theirs. 7 They are terrible and dreadful; Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves. Hab. 1:5-7*

Today the world is rapidly changing. We don’t know how God is working today. Yet God still rules in the kingdoms of men. Many nations are doing more and more of the things listed in Leviticus. As the iniquity of the Amorites, so their iniquity grows, and judgment draws nearer. No one knows what is to come, but God gave Habakkuk the answer we need today. When Babylon conquered Judah, they were proud, wicked and cruel in what they did. Even Habakkuk could not understand how God could remain *“silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves”* (Hab. 1:13). God’s answer was simple. The just must live by faith and trust God completely even when they don’t understand.

*“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.” Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:37-39*

# Job

In several senses the book of Job is one of the most difficult in the Bible. First because it contains some great enigmas that only Deuteronomy 29:29(*secret things belong to God*) can answer. Second, because God made it clear at the end of the book that Job said some things in his speeches that were incorrect. Like Pharaoh's words to Moses were just his own words, so also all the words of the three friends were their own words. Not even all Job's words were right. Job is an inspired book of uninspired words, or an inspired book of wrong answers:

*the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Who is this who **darkens counsel by words without knowledge?** 38:1-2*

*Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: "Shall the **one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God,** let him answer it." Then Job answered the LORD and said: "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer You? I lay my hand over my mouth. Once I have spoken, but I will not answer; yes, twice, but I will proceed no further." Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: "Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: "**Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?** Job 40:1-8*

*Then Job answered the LORD and said: "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore **I have uttered what I did not understand,** things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; you said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore **I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.**" Job 42:1-6*

God accused and Job had admitted that he had uttered things that were wrong. Some of the things Job said "darken counsel by words without knowledge," "contend" and "rebuke" God, "annul God's judgment" and "condemn" God that "he might be justified." At the end, Job "abhors" himself and feels the need to "repent in dust and ashes." From this we are forced to conclude that there are some things in Job's words that are not to be taken as inspired Scripture. But Job's words for the most part are right compared to the words of the three friends

*Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because **you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has.**" Job 42:8*

God strongly condemned the words of the three friends. They "have not spoken of Me what is right." This leaves the student in a difficult position. While the rest of the Bible is revealed to be inspired Scripture, the book of Job records exactly what they said (inspiration) but is clear that the inaccuracies were left in their words.

This requires us to be very careful. Things in the book of Job are much like the words of the Pharisees to Jesus. The Spirit accurately records what they said but makes it clear that they were false words. This is not the only book in the Bible where these things occur. We have the uninspired words of Cain in Genesis, of Pharaoh in Exodus, of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel and of Pilate and Herod in the gospels and Festus in the book of Acts. We also have many instances of the sins of the patriarchs and others recorded without comment. The only difference in Job is the length of the speeches, and that righteous Job makes some of these statements.

Job contains a narrative in the first two chapters. Then records the "speeches" or "debates" between Job and each of the three friends. The speeches are in Hebrew poetry which is why Job is one of the books of Poetry. At the end, Elihu spoke and then Jehovah addressed Job's words and Job "repents."

## When Job Lived and who wrote the Book

We can only use deduction to answer the question who wrote the book or when Job lived and it

doesn't take us very far toward the answers. Job had 10 adult children. This would put him at least in his fifties. Yet after his affliction he lived another one hundred and forty years. This means he lived at least to be 190 years old. This would place us somewhere around the time of Abraham. For by the time of Moses, man's life span had dropped to about 120. He functioned as a priest for his children and his three friends so it would be unlikely that the Law had been given on Sinai. We are fairly safe concluding Job lived in the Patriarchal age.

When and by whom the book was written is pure guesswork. Job himself, Elihu, Moses, Solomon, or a Jewish scribe have all been put forth. The truth is that there is no internal or external evidence of a compelling nature to rely upon. The arguments for each are interesting, but anyone put forth as the author is only a guess. God didn't tell us so it is not important for us to know.

The book had an important place in the hearts of Israel. James described Job as a real person and cited the book concerning his perseverance.

*Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord-- that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. James 5:11*

God also speaks of Job as a real person and as someone Jeremiah knew about.

*"Or if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20 even though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live," says the Lord God, "they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver only themselves by their righteousness." Ezek 14:19-20*

In spite of the difficulties that must be overcome to gain a mastery of this book it is worth the effort! It is a book rich with truths about some very vital issues God's people must face.

Job's Lamentation	3:1-26		
Eliphaz' Words	4:1-21; 5:1-27;	15:1-35	22:1-30
Job Responds to Eliphaz	6:1-30; 7:1-21	16:1-22; 17:1-21	23:1-17; 24:1-24
Bildad's Words:	8:1-22;	18:1-21	25:1-6
Job Responds to Bildad	9:1-35; 10:1-22	19:1-29	26:1-14;
Zophar's Words:	11:1-20	20:1-29	
Job Responds to Zophar:	12:1-25; 13:1-28	21:1-34	
Job's Final Words	27-31		
Elihu Speaks	32:1-37:24		
Jehovah Speaks	38:1-40:2	40:6-41:34	42:7-8
Job Responds to Jehovah	40:3-5	42:1-6	

### **Job's Righteous Character:**

God Himself revealed Job was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil Job 1:1; 1:8; 2:3;

These terms are important to understand by those who want to be viewed by God in this light.

**blameless:** perfect, complete, a) complete, perfect; one who lacks nothing in physical strength, beauty, etc. b) sound, wholesome; ... c) morally innocent, having integrity; one who is morally and ethically pure

**upright:** straight, upright, correct, right, a) straight, level, b) right, pleasing, correct, c) straightforward, just, upright, fitting, proper, d) uprightness, righteous, upright, e) what is upright (substantive)

**fearing God:** fearing, reverent, afraid, fearing; morally, reverent:

**turning away from evil:** to turn aside, to depart 1) to turn in unto, 2) to depart from way, to 1) bad, evil, a)

disagreeable, malignant... unpleasant..(giving pain, unhappiness, misery)... displeasing... (hurtful)... unkind (vicious in disposition, j)bad, evil, wicked(ethically) 1)in general, of persons, of thoughts 2) deeds, actions..."

### Job 23:11-12

*My foot has held fast to His path  
Not departed from the commands of His lips*

*Kept His way and not turned aside  
Treasured His words more than necessary food.*

### Job 29:12-17

*I delivered the poor who cried for help  
I made the widows heart sing for joy.  
my justice was like a robe and a turban.  
I was a father to the poor,  
I broke the fangs of the wicked,*

*and the orphan who had no helper  
I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;  
I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.  
searched out the case that I did not know.  
and plucked the victim from his teeth.*

### Job 31:1-40

1 *made a covenant with my eyes; not to look on a **young woman?***  
5 *If I have walked with **falsehood**, or if my foot has hastened to **deceit**,*  
7 *If my **step has turned from the way**, or my heart walked after my eyes, or if any spot adheres to my hands,*  
9 *If my **heart has been enticed by a woman**, or if I have **lurked at my neighbor's door**,*  
13 *If I have **despised the cause of my male or female servant** when they complained against me,*  
16 *If I have **kept the poor from their desire**, or **caused the eyes of the widow to fail**,*  
17 *Or **eaten my morsel by myself**, so that the fatherless may not eat of it*  
18 *(But from my youth I reared him as a father, and from my mother's womb I guided the widow)*  
19 *If I have **seen anyone perish for lack of clothing**, or **any poor man without covering**;*  
24 *If I have **made gold my hope**, or said to fine gold, 'You are my confidence';*  
25 *If I have **rejoiced because my wealth was great**, and because my hand had gained much;*  
26 *If I have **observed the sun when it shines**, or **the moon moving in brightness**,*  
27 ***So that my heart has been secretly enticed, and my mouth has kissed my hand**;*  
28 *This also would be an **iniquity worthy of judgment**, for I would have denied God who is above.*  
29 *If I have **rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me**, or **lifted myself up when evil found him***  
30 *(Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin by asking for a curse on his soul);*  
32 *(But no sojourner had to lodge in the street, for I have opened my doors to the traveler);*  
33 *If I have covered my transgressions as Adam, by **hiding my iniquity in my bosom**,*  
34 ***Because I feared the great multitude, and dreaded the contempt of families, so that I kept silence and did not go out of the door--***  
39 *If I have eaten its fruit without money, or caused its owners to lose their lives;*

What is seen above is what God saw in Job that made him blameless and righteous. He loved God and man.

### Job's suffering and grief.

Satan's first slander of Job's character centered on his possessions and family. When God gave him the right to take these things from Job, he also gave him full control over how he took them.

*So the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD. Job 1:12*

There was no mercy, not only did he lose everything, but he lost them rapidly and with different methods to make it more difficult to comprehend and deal with:

7000 sheep

*The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I alone have escaped to tell you! 1:16*

3000 camels

*The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them and killed the servants with the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you! 1:17*

500 yoke(1000) oxen

*the Sabeans raided and took them, have killed the servants 1:14-15*

500 female donkeys

*with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you! 1:14-15*

very many servants

*(all died either in the fire of God, Chaldean or Sabeen raid) 1:14-18*

7 sons and 3 daughters      *Your sons and daughters were in their oldest brother's house," suddenly a great wind came from across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead. 1:18*

Job's reaction to his first losses is honorable and justified God's confidence.

*Then Job arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." 22 In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong. Job 1:20-22*

After his first loss, Satan is ready to try again. He reasons with God that the stakes were not high enough. He does not admit that he was wrong in his first statement, but seeks another chance:

*So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 "But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will surely curse You to Your face!" 6 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand, but spare his life." Job 2:4-6*

Again, God gives the devil the power to do what he wants, and allows Satan the right to choose the means of touching his bone and flesh. Again he chooses a horrible method.

*So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself while he sat in the midst of the ashes. Job 2:7-8*

Job then lost his wife's support and confidence.

*Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" In all this Job did not sin with his lips. Job 2:9-10*

There must have been deep agony in Job's heart to be so alone in this illness and loss. But it did not stop there. The devil then began a slow and agonizing torture of Job's mind. First by showing the false friendship of his "three" friends. Though they come to "comfort him" they soon change.

*Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one came from his own place-- Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. For they had made an appointment together to come and mourn with him, and to comfort him. 12 And when they raised their eyes from afar, and **did not recognize him**, they lifted their voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13 So they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, **for they saw that his grief was very great.** Job 2:11-13*

Job's describes his first feelings after being struck down immediately after the three friends arrived:

*Why is light given to **him who is in misery**, and life to the **bitter of soul**, 21 Who **long for death**, but it does not come, and search for it more than hidden treasures; 22 Who rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave? 23 Why is light given to a man whose way is hidden, and whom God has hedged in? 24 **For my sighing comes before I eat, and my groanings pour out like water.** 25 **For the thing I greatly feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded has happened to me.** 26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; **I have no rest, for trouble comes.** Job 3:20-26*

It is very difficult to understand why Job's three friends took his speech so negatively. But they immediately begin to attack him. They are fully convinced that he is a wicked sinner and a hypocrite. They do not understand why he does not admit his sins and ask God to forgive him. Eliphaz is actually very rude and insulting(not to mention totally in the wrong).

*Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: 2 "If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary? But who can withhold himself from speaking? 3 Surely you have instructed many, and you have strengthened weak hands. 4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling, and you have strengthened the feeble knees; 5 But now it comes upon you, and you are weary; it touches you, and you are troubled. 6 Is not your reverence your confidence? And the integrity of your ways your hope? 7 "Remember now, **who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright ever cut off?** 8 Even as I have seen, **those who plow iniquity and sow trouble reap the same.** 9 By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of His anger they are consumed. Job 4:1-9*

*“But as for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause-- Job 5:8*

*“Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects; therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty. Job 5:17*

*You shall know that your tent is in peace; you shall visit your habitation and find nothing amiss. 25 You shall also know that your descendants shall be many, and your offspring like the grass of the earth. 26 You shall come to the grave at a full age, as a sheaf of grain ripens in its season. 27 Behold, this we have searched out; it is true. Hear it, and know for yourself.” 5:24-27*

He was speaking to Job as though Job is an unconverted sinner. As though Job does not know these things, as though Job has not already considered them. God had already informed us that Job was morally superior to all of them, yet they speak to him as though all he needs to do to fix this situation is repent of things he was already repenting of before any of this happened.

*Then Job answered and said: 2 “Oh, that my grief were fully weighed, and my calamity laid with it on the scales! 3 For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea-- therefore my words have been rash. 4 For the arrows of the Almighty are within me; my spirit drinks in their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. Job 6:1-4*

*To him who is afflicted, kindness should be shown by his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty. 15 My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook, like the streams of the brooks that pass away... 21 For now you are nothing, you see terror and are afraid. 22 Did I ever say, ‘Bring something to me’? Or, ‘Offer a bribe for me from your wealth’? 23 Or, ‘Deliver me from the enemy’s hand’? Or, ‘Redeem me from the hand of oppressors’? 24 “Teach me, and I will hold my tongue; cause me to understand wherein I have erred. 25 How forceful are right words! But what does your arguing prove? 26 Do you intend to rebuke my words, and the speeches of a desperate one, which are as wind? 27 Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless, and you undermine your friend. 28 Now therefore, be pleased to look at me; for I would never lie to your face. 29 Yield now, let there be no injustice! Yes, concede, my righteousness still stands! Job 6:14-15; 21-29*

*When I lie down, I say, ‘When shall I arise, and the night be ended?’ For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn. 5 My flesh is caked with worms and dust, my skin is cracked and breaks out afresh. 6 “My days are swifter than a weaver’s shuttle, and are spent without hope. Job 7:4-6*

*When I say, ‘My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,’ 14 Then You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, 15 So that my soul chooses strangling and death rather than my body. 16 I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, for my days are but a breath. Job 7:13-16*

The themes in the book of Job are now beginning to become clear. There is the slow revealing of Job’s great suffering, there are the rebukes of his friends for what they are doing to him, and there is a gradual bitterness developing in Job’s heart toward God. What Job has said is that He has done nothing to deserve what is happening to him (absolutely true), and he is suffering grievously. He wants to know if they intend to rebuke his words that were uttered under extreme duress. But then, at the end of chapter seven, we see the first crack in the armor.

*Then You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions... 19 How long? Will You not look away from me, and let me alone till I swallow my saliva? 20 Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself? 21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? For now I will lie down in the dust, and You will seek me diligently, but I will no longer be.” Job 7:14, 19-21*

The words of the Eliphaz about Job’s getting the same treatment all the other wicked get have struck a nerve. Job begins to wrestle with this problem. Why is he getting this treatment? He knows it is not for his wicked conduct, but he is unsure of what other reason it could be. But then he begins to think that God is not being fair to him.

Bildad’s treatment is no better:

*How long will you speak these things, and the words of your mouth be like a strong wind? 3 Does God subvert judgment? Or does the Almighty pervert justice? 4 **If your sons have sinned against Him, he has cast them away for their transgression.** 5 **If you would earnestly seek God and make your supplication to the Almighty,** 6 **If you were pure and upright,** surely now **He would awake for you,** and prosper your rightful dwelling place. 7 Though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would*

increase abundantly. Job 8:2-7

What is the implication of Bildad's speech? Job is getting exactly what he deserved because he is a sinner. He must still be in sin and refusing to repent or God would resolve this for him. The problem with this reasoning is that it is false to the core. Job was not guilty and did not deserve what he was receiving. **Satan is using the false teaching and the jealousy? envy? Or ...? of the three friends** at a time of severe emotional weakness on Job's part. Note how this increased his suffering:

*For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause. 18 He will not allow me to catch my breath, but fills me with bitterness. 19 If it is a matter of strength, indeed He is strong; and if of justice, who will appoint my day in court? Job 9:17-19*

*It is all one thing; therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.' 23 If the scourge slays suddenly, he laughs at the plight of the innocent. 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, who else could it be? Job 9:22-24*

*My soul loathes my life; I will give free course to my complaint, I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. Job 10:1*

Job has been undone by the false reasoning and attacks of his friends. He withstood Eliphaz speech, but began to slip, now his suffering has increased greatly with Bildad's affirmation that he has brought this on himself. He begins to question God's rule. Job should have thought longer about his question in 9:24.

Zophar's speech seems to imply that Job's answers so far ;have provoked him to anger or frustration. He is much harsher than the first two, and speaks for God about things he has no knowledge of. With friends like this, no one needs any enemies. One has to wonder what Job could have done to deserve this type of judgement and censure:

*Should not the multitude of words be answered? And should a man full of talk be vindicated? 3 Should your empty talk make men hold their peace? And when you mock, should no one rebuke you? 4 For you have said, 'My doctrine is pure, and I am clean in your eyes.' 5 But oh, that God would speak, and open His lips against you, 6 That He would show you the secrets of wisdom! For they would double your prudence. Know therefore that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves. Job 11:2-6*

After this speech, Job begins to regain his composure. After his initial rebuke at the folly of the first speech of each of his three friends, he warns them that they are forging lies, and are speaking wickedly and deceitfully for God. They are showing partiality and he fears for them if they continue on in this error. He begins to reign in his own feelings, toward the matter, regaining control once again:

*"No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you! 3 But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these? 4 "I am one mocked by his friends, who called on God, and He answered him, the just and blameless who is ridiculed. Job 12:2-4*

*"Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. 2 What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you. 3 But I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. 4 But you forgers of lies, you are all worthless physicians. 5 Oh, that you would be silent, and it would be your wisdom! 6 Now hear my reasoning, and heed the pleadings of my lips. 7 **Will you speak wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for Him? 8 Will you show partiality for Him? Will you contend for God? Will it be well when He searches you out? Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man? 10 He will surely reprove you if you secretly show partiality...** 12 Your platitudes are proverbs of ashes, your defenses are defenses of clay. Job 13:8-10, 12*

Eliphaz does not heed Job's warning, but continues to rebuke and charge him falsely:

*"Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? 3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or by speeches with which he can do no good? 4 Yes, **you cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God. 5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth, and you choose the tongue of the crafty. 6 Your own mouth condemns you, and not I; yes, your own lips testify against you. Job 15:2-6***

*Why does your heart carry you away, and what do your eyes wink at, 13 That you turn your spirit*



against God, and let such words go out of your mouth? 14 "What is man, that he could be pure? And he who is born of a woman, that he could be righteous? Job 15:12-14

After Eliphaz speech, we see Job beginning to calm down and settle in. He realizes these men have nothing to offer him. Their fangs have now been removed and he simply speaks with them. He still makes some statements concerning God that were words without knowledge, but gone are the strong accusations.

*Then Job answered and said: 2 "I have heard many such things; **miserable comforters are you all!** 3 Shall words of wind have an end? Or what provokes you that you answer? 4 **I also could speak as you do, if your soul were in my soul's place. I could heap up words against you, and shake my head at you;** 5 **But I would strengthen you with my mouth, and the comfort of my lips would relieve your grief.** 6 "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved; and if I remain silent, how am I eased? 12 I was at ease, but **He has shattered me;** he also **has taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;** he has **set me up for His target,** 13 His archers surround me. **He pierces my heart and does not pity;** he pours out my gall on the ground. 14 He **breaks me with wound upon wound;** he **runs at me like a warrior.** 15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin, and laid my head in the dust. 16 **My face is flushed from weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death;** 17 Although no violence is in my hands, and my prayer is pure. 18 "O earth, do not cover my blood, and let my cry have no resting place! 19 Surely even now my witness is in heaven, and my evidence is on high. 20 **My friends scorn me;** my eyes pour out tears to God. 21 Oh, that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleads for his neighbor! 22 For when a few years are finished, I shall go the way of no return. Job 16:1-6; 12-22*

*"But **He has made me a byword of the people, and I have become one in whose face men spit.** 7 **My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow, and all my members are like shadows. .... 11 My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart.** Job 17:6-7; 11*

Job now begins to speak of the emotional damage. The changed attitudes of the people. Suffering we do not often associate with his physical anguish. Bildad's speech continues on the same theme, first he insults Job's intelligence and spirituality, then goes on to once again affirm that only the wicked suffer. Job's answer continues to rebuke them for cruelty, but once again he speaks against God.

***How long will you torment my soul, and break me in pieces with words? 3 These ten times you have reproached me; you are not ashamed that you have wronged me.** 4 And if indeed I have erred, my error remains with me. 5 **If indeed you magnify yourselves against me, and plead my disgrace against me,** 6 **Know then that God has wronged me, and has surrounded me with His net. ... 13 "He has removed my brothers far from me, and my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.** 14 **My relatives have failed, and my close friends have forgotten me.** 15 Those who dwell in my house, and **my maidservants, count me as a stranger;** I am an alien in their sight. 16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer; I beg him with my mouth. 17 **My breath is offensive to my wife, and I am loathsome to my own brothers.** 18 **Even young children despise me;** I arise, and **they speak against me.** 19 **All my close friends abhor me, and those whom I love have turned against me.** 20 **My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,** and I have escaped by the skin of my teeth. 21 **"Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me! 22 Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh?** Job 19:2-6, 13-22*

Zophar's speech contains no direct insults of Job, but he continues the theme that he must have done something wrong. Job fights back by showing how completely false their reasoning is. There supposition that Job must have done something wrong is based upon the false premise that God gives good to all who serve Him and evil to those who do not. Job proves conclusively that all their words against him have been evil and wicked since their premise is false. In the midst of his reasoning and proving, he accuses them of preaching and teaching error.

*Listen carefully to my speech, and let this be your consolation. 3 Bear with me that I may speak, and after I have spoken, keep mocking. ... "Look, I know your thoughts, and the schemes with which you would wrong me. ... How then can you comfort me with empty words, since falsehood remains in your answers?" Job 21:2-3, 27, 34*

Eliphaz's final speech is deeply insulting to Job. He accuses him of base and wicked things that

no one could even know without reading Job's mind.

*Is it because of your fear of Him that He reproves you, and enters into judgment with you? 5 **Is not your wickedness great, and your iniquity without end?** 6 For you have **taken pledges from your brother for no reason, and stripped the naked of their clothing.** 7 You have **not given the weary water to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry.** ... 9 You have **sent widows away empty, and the strength of the fatherless was crushed.** 10 **Therefore snares are all around you, and sudden fear troubles you, ...** 21 'Now **acquaint yourself with Him, and be at peace; Thereby good will come to you.** 22 Receive, please, instruction from His mouth, and **lay up His words in your heart.** 23 If you **return to the Almighty, you will be built up; you will remove iniquity far from your tents...** 27 You will **make your prayer to Him, he will hear you, and you will pay your vows.** Job 22:4-7; 9-10; 21-23, 27*

None of the things Eliphaz states are true. They are wicked imaginations in his own heart. But they hurt Job, reminding him of the prayers he has uttered in vain. He begins his defense with his agonizing attempts to reach God. He also begins to defend his integrity and righteousness.

*Even today **my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless** because of my groaning. 3 **Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat!** 4 I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. 5 I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. ... 8 "Look, **I go forward, but He is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive Him;** Job 23:2-5, 8*

Bildad's final speech contains nothing new and little that has anything pertinent. The three friends who came to comfort Job have ended up debating with him and accomplishing nothing. They have neither convinced or convicted him of wrongdoing. His final words describe his righteousness, and a few more of the things he has suffered.

*How have you helped him who is without power? How have you saved the arm that has no strength? 3 How have you counseled one who has no wisdom? And how have you declared sound advice to many? Job 26:2-3*

*Oh, that I were as in months past, as in the days when God watched over me; 3 When His lamp shone upon my head, and when by His light I walked through darkness; 4 Just as I was in the days of my prime, when the friendly counsel of God was over my tent; 5 When the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were around me; 6 When my steps were bathed with cream, and the rock poured out rivers of oil for me! 7 "When I went out to the gate by the city, when I took my seat in the open square, 8 The young men saw me and hid, and the aged arose and stood; 9 The princes refrained from talking, and put their hand on their mouth; 10 The voice of nobles was hushed, and their tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth. 11 When the ear heard, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw, then it approved me; Job 29:2-11*

*But **now they mock at me, men younger than I, whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock....** 9 "And **now I am their taunting song; yes, I am their byword.** 10 **They abhor me, they keep far from me; they do not hesitate to spit in my face.** ... 16 "And **now my soul is poured out** because of my plight; **the days of affliction take hold of me.** 17 **My bones are pierced in me at night, and my gnawing pains take no rest.** 18 By great force **my garment is disfigured;** it binds me about as the collar of my coat. 19 **He has cast me into the mire, and I have become like dust and ashes.** 20 "I **cry out to You, but You do not answer me; I stand up, and You regard me.** 21 **But You have become cruel to me; with the strength of Your hand You oppose me.** 22 . ... 26 **But when I looked for good, evil came to me; and when I waited for light, then came darkness.** 27 **My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest; days of affliction confront me.** 28 **I go about mourning, but not in the sun; I stand up in the assembly and cry out for help.** 29 I am a brother of jackals, and a companion of ostriches. 30 **My skin grows black and falls from me; my bones burn with fever.** Job 30:1, 9-10; 16-22; 26-30*

Elihu's speech seems to be filled with both wisdom and caution, yet it appears at several points that he too falsely accuses Job of sinning to bring on his present circumstances, yet over all, if he had spoken first, Job may have been spared the terrible things he had spoken because of the resentment stirred by the three friends.

## God speaks to Job:

1. God's initial opinion of Job at the beginning of the book:

**that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? 1:8**

**there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause." Job 2:3-6**

**In all this Job did not sin with his lips. Job 2:10**

Yet God's first statement to Job after speaking to his friends condemns his words:

**Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Job 38:2-3**

What God was responding to:

**May the day perish on which I was born, "Why did I not die at birth? Why did I not perish when I came from the womb? Job 3:3-4, 11-12**

For **the arrows of the Almighty are within me; my spirit drinks in their poison; the terrors of God are arrayed against me. Job 6:4**

When I say, 'My bed will comfort me, my couch will ease my complaint,' 14 Then **You scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions, ... 20 Have I sinned? What have I done to You, O watcher of men? Why have You set me as Your target, so that I am a burden to myself? 21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression, and take away my iniquity? Job 7:13-14, 20**

**For He crushes me with a tempest, and multiplies my wounds without cause. Job 9:17**

**It is all one thing; therefore I say, 'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.' 23 If the scourge slays suddenly, **he laughs at the plight of the innocent.** 24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked. **He covers the faces of its judges. If it is not He, who else could it be? Job 9:22-24****

**Know then that God has wronged me, and has surrounded me with His net.** 7 "If I cry out concerning wrong, I am not heard. **If I cry aloud, there is no justice.** 8 **He has fenced up my way,** so that I cannot pass; and He has set darkness in my paths. 9 **He has stripped me of my glory,** and taken the crown from my head. 10 **He breaks me down on every side,** and I am gone; my hope He has uprooted like a tree. 11 **He has also kindled His wrath against me, and He counts me as one of His enemies.** 12 His troops come together and build up their road against me; they encamp all around my tent. **Job 19:6-12**

**Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh? Job 19:22**

Even today my complaint is bitter; my hand is listless because of my groaning. **3 Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, that I might come to His seat! 4 I would present my case before Him, and fill my mouth with arguments. 5 I would know the words which He would answer me, and understand what He would say to me. 6 Would He contend with me in His great power? No! But He would take note of me.** 7 There the upright could reason with Him, and I would be delivered forever from my Judge. **Job 23:2-7**

Though this is not an exclusive list, the highlighted points are the type of things God is responding to. It is these words that God condemns with the statements:

**Who is this who darkens counsel by words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. Job 38:2-3**

Moreover the LORD answered Job, and said: 2 **"Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him? He who rebukes God, let him answer it." Job 40:1-2**

Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me: 8 **"Would you indeed annul My judgment? Would you condemn Me that you may be justified? Job 40:7-8**

Everything God poses to Job is calculated to manifest the following:

1. I will question you, and you shall answer Me.
2. Shall the one who contends with the Almighty correct Him?

3. He who rebukes God, let him answer
4. Would you indeed annul My judgment?
5. Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?

The book ends when God condemns the three friends for their folly, and asks Job to mediate for them. He then blessed Job abundantly.

*And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. "Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly; because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has." So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had accepted Job. Job 42:7-9*

# Abraham - 1 - Early Life

## Introduction

The life of Abraham is recorded in Genesis 12-25:11. His life marks an epoch in God's eternal purpose. Through Abraham's call, God began working His eternal purpose through the nation that would result from Abraham's seed. Although the events in the first chapter of Romans cycled again and again, they applied the first time to what occurred after the tower of Babel.

*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Rom 1:20-25*

The various descendants listed in the Tenth chapter of Genesis all band together to build the tower of Babel. God then changed their languages and scattered them over all the earth.

*Therefore its name is called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth; and from there the Lord scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth. Gen 11:9*

Each of the nations that resulted from this scattering all followed the path Paul described above. Immediately after they were scattered, God revealed the genealogy of Shem as it led to Abraham. (Gen 11:10-26)

The chart below gives the descendants of Noah through Shem in the top line of each column. The age of each patriarch at the birth of their first son is then listed along with their age at the birth of grandson, great grandson etc. The last two lines show how old each patriarch was when they died with the passage in Genesis. Thus, in the first column Seth was 100 when his firstborn son Arphaxad was born. Arphaxad was 35 when his firstborn son Salah was born and Arphaxad was 135 when Salah was born. Shem was still alive when Abraham was born. Terah's name is asterisked because the three sons are all listed together and the fact that Terah died before Abraham entered Canaan at the age of seventy-five probably means he was not the firstborn.

## Epoch's in the Life of Abraham

The narrative of his life is a very interesting story of a faithful life. But more than any other Bible Character revealed in the Old Covenant, Abraham's life becomes a template and example for many of the doctrines in the New Testament.

- call out of the Ur of the Chaldees (Heb 11)
- Dealings with Melchizedek (Heb 7)
- Faith in God's promise of a son. (Rom 4)
- Covenant of circumcision (Rom 4)
- Casting out Hagar. (Gal 4)
- Offering of Isaac (James 2)

Perhaps even more important, God placed Abraham in a very important position in His eternal purpose. He is the father of both the Israelite and Messiah's kingdom. Both those who were circumcised (Israel according to the flesh) and those who were uncircumcised (Gentiles who entered Christ's kingdom) look to Abraham as their father.

*Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. ... Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith*

of Abraham, who is the father of us all. Rom 4:9-12, 16

**The Early Life of Abram.**

Abraham lived about 2,100 years before Christ was born, or a little over 4,000 years ago. He was born in Ur of the Chaldees(Genesis 11:27-32). His father was Terah. We do not know the name of his mother. From this passage, God only gives us a few facts about Abram's early life.

He had three brothers, one died very young, and the other he left behind when he left Ur. His mother died(or his father had two wives) for Sarai was his half sister. Sarai could have no children.

He took over the care of his nephew Lot

God first called him out of Ur of the Chaldees and went to Haran. Acts 7:2-4

Then after the death of his father Terah, he was called to come into the promised land.

*And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. Acts 7:2-5*

God offered the following chronology to help us visualize the amount of time that passed.

Gen 12:4 And Abram was seventy-five(75) years old when he departed from Haran.

Gen 16:16 Abram was eighty-six(86) years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

Gen 21:5 Abraham was one hundred(100) years old when his son Isaac was born.

Gen 25:7 After the birth of Isaac, he lived to be one hundred and seventy-five(175) years.

Although Abram's father and brother were idolaters, there is no indication whether Abraham had been an idolater who had repented or had always served the Lord.

Shem	Arphaxad	Salah	Eber	Peleg	Rue	Serug	Nahor	Terah*	Abram	Isaac	Jacob
100	born										
135	35	born									
165	65	30	born								
199	99	64	34	born							
229	129	94	64	30	born						
261	161	126	96	62	32	born					
291	191	156	126	92	62	30	born				
320	220	185	155	121	91	59	29	born			
419	290	255	225	191	161	129	99	70	born		
									100	born	
									160	60	born
600	438	433	464	239	239	230	138	205	175	180	147
11:10	11:12-13	11:14	11:16	11:18	11:20	11:22	11:24	11:32	25:7	35:29	47:28

*And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods. 3 Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his descendants and gave him Isaac. ... 14 "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you*

dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh 24:2-4, 14-15

We know his brother's family was deeply infected with idolatry.

*Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the household idols that were her father's. ... 30 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?" 31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32 With whomever you find your gods, do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take it with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them. Gen 31:19-20, 30-32*

### **Abram's story begins with God's Promise/Covenant**

Sometimes called a covenant(Acts 3:25), other times a promise(Rom 4:13-21), Paul called God's first words to Abraham(Gen 12:1-3) it both a promise and a covenant.

*Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's **covenant**, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the **promises** made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the **covenant** that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the **promise** of no effect. 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of **promise**; but God gave it to Abraham by **promise**. Gal 3:15-18*

God made a conditional promise/covenant with Abraham. God demanded that Abraham leave his country and kindred and come to the land God would reveal to him. Once Abraham left his land and left his family, he had fulfilled his part in the covenant/promise. This promise was again given after he offered up Isaac(Gen 22:15-18).

## Abraham - 2 - A Covenant with God

The History of Abraham's Life story begins in Gen 12:1-3

*Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. 2 I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." Gen 12:1-3*

**Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you.**

As with all Covenants/Promises, there are two sides to the agreement. In this case, God offered to enter into a covenant/contract. Once that covenant was ratified, it was binding to both parties.

*Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. 17 And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, **cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect.** 18 For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal 3:15-18*

Like all of God's covenants, He offered the greater and more lasting promises and blessings, based on a quality of obedience and submission that can only be characterized by grace and not by works.

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, Rom. 4:1-6*

Thus Abraham's side of the covenant(contract) is a single simple truth. By faith he must leave his country, his family and father's house. He must leave all the friends, acquaintances and family he had and begin anew in a foreign land. This is what God asked of him. God had sized Abraham up, just as he had sized up Noah and Enoch before him. God chose Abraham to bring the promise to Eve one step closer to fulfillment.

*And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." Gen 3:14*

There was only one thing required of Abraham to become that man. He needed Abraham to leave his country and kindred. He wanted to make him a great nation and bring the Christ through him. But Abraham had to do this one step. Once he took that step, he fulfilled his part of the covenant. This was all God expected and demanded of him. Abraham did exactly as he was told:

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:8-10*

The Spirit spoke through Nehemiah and summed up the following observations about Abraham:

*You alone are the LORD; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and everything on it, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You. 7 "You are the LORD God, who chose Abram, and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans, and gave him the name Abraham; 8 You found his heart faithful before You, and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, and the Girgashites-- to give it to his descendants. You have performed Your words, for You are righteous. Neh 9:6-8*



## **Blessings Promised to Abraham if he Obeyed.**

<b><u>I will make you a great nation</u></b>	He became first the nation of Israel and later the father of all the godly.
<b><u>I will bless you</u></b>	Blessed as an individual: Long Life; wealth; Health; God's Promises.
<b><u>Make your name great</u></b>	Abraham became famous man among his own nation and still is today.
<b><u>You shall be a blessing.</u></b>	Abraham was a great blessing to the Jewish nation, and he still brings great blessings today.
<b><u>I will bless those who bless you</u></b>	Those who blessed him and appreciated the kind of man he was and what he stood for would be blessed by God(including all Christians!).
<b><u>I will curse him who curses you</u></b>	Those who hated Abraham and what he stood for would be cursed by God.
<b><u>in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed</u></b>	Greatest promise to Abraham. Thru his descendants the promised Savior would come. Gal 3:6-16

On the map on the next page, the scope of Abraham's journey is revealed. Stephen told us it was a two stage journey. First, he moved with his father Terah to Haran. Then, after Terah's death, he moved his family to Canaan.

*And he said, "Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, 3 and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' 4 Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. Acts 7:2-5*

After he arrived in Shechem, all that God had required of him to receive the covenant was completed. At that moment, God again appeared to Abraham and gave him assurance that the covenant was now complete and active.

*So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. 7 Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, who had appeared to him. Gen 12:4-8*

### **Abram's Sin Gen. 12:10-20**

One of the important principles we find throughout the Scriptures is the need to be discerning. Many times, God simply records the events as they transpired without any comment on the goodness or evil of the decision. So "Noah was drunk in his tent" is simply recorded(Gen 9:21). It is not until later that we learn drunkenness is a sin.

So also with Abram. He does something similar to Ananias with Saphira(Acts 5). They both agree to deceive the Egyptians.

*And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you are a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This is his wife'; and they will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 Please say you are my sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that I may live because of you." Gen 12:11-13*

But Abram makes Sarai the main character in the deception. Though they are married and they are also half brother and sister, Abram only wants the brother/sister relationship brought out. Such a "half-truth" was a lie. This would relieve Abram of any risk to his life, but left Sarai exposed to great danger. Like all others who enter into covenant with God, Abram was still weak and still prone to sin. Grave consequences could have resulted, God intervened in behalf of Abram and spared Sarai from the possibility of being "married" and entering into an adulterous relationship.

Abraham even profits from this deception.

*So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she was very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels. Gen 12:14-16*

One has to wonder if this plagued Abram's conscience to profit from a lie. We learn a great deal about the grace of God in this section. Abram is a man of faith and trust who in a moment of temptation falls under its power. In all other ways he is the morally superior to Pharaoh, but not in this one instance. God in grace and mercy protects Abram from the consequences of this sin. He keeps Pharaoh from defiling Abram's wife. Yet Pharaoh rebuked Abram for his sin. His silence told well that the rebuke hit home and could not be contradicted.

*But the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, "What is this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she was your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She is my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take her and go your way." 20 So Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had. Gen 12:17-20*

As noted above, since all have sinned and fallen short (Rom 3:23), it is evident that all of God's servants, even His greatest ones have sinned. As Paul noted, Abraham was righteous by faith, not by works. Far from causing scorn or seeking to justify his conduct, we should realize that God is letting us see that they are just like us. Never forget just as "*Elijah was a man of like passions with us,*" (Jas. 5:17), so also was Abraham, Moses, David, and Daniel. Just like us they sinned and just like us they were forgiven.

## Abram - 3 - Lot, and Melchizedek

The events in these two chapters have a very large impact in the New Testament, primarily because of Melchizedek. Chapter Thirteen described the events that led to Lot move to Sodom, and explained why he was there. Chapter Fourteen gives an historical account of a battle between nine kings (*four kings against five*—Gen. 14:9). Although these are interesting events, it is Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek that received an entire Psalm and an entire chapter in Hebrews.

The account begins with the statement of fact that the combined wealth of Abram and Lot are now too much for them to remain together any longer.

*Now the land was not able to support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land. Gen. 13:6-7*

Abraham's generosity and unselfish nature were clearly set forth in the choice he gave to Lot. Especially since God had promised the land to him. Yet Abram gave Lot the first choice.

*So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we are brethren. 9 Is not the whole land before you? Please separate from me. If you take the left, then I will go to the right; or, if you go to the right, then I will go to the left." Gen. 13:8-9*

Abraham was willing to give up whatever was necessary to keep peace. Since they were brethren, Abraham thought peace was more important than goods or rights.

Lot's choice was based solely upon the beauty and value of the pasture lands necessary to feed his flocks. The final words reveal something sinister about the land where he would sojourn. We don't know when Lot found out. If he knew before and chose it anyway then it reveals a sad blight in his character. Yet when he found out later, he could have left that land and moved elsewhere. When it was all finished, this choice cost Lot all his possessions, his wife and whatever moral purity his daughters might have possessed up to that point in their sojourning with Abram.

*And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord. Gen. 13:10-13*

### God reaffirmed His covenant with Abram.

After Lot left, the LORD (Jehovah), again appeared to him and promised he would receive the land and that his descendants would be many.

*And the Lord said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are — northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever. 16 And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." Gen. 13:14-17*

Before leaving this chapter, there is one final important statement made about Abram.

*Then Abram moved his tent, and went and dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre, which are in Hebron, and **built an altar there to the Lord.** Gen. 13:18*

This was not the first time it is mentioned that Abram built an altar. He used this altar "to call on the name of LORD (Jehovah)." Whether this altar was used for sacrifices for sin, or as worship is not clearly revealed.

*6 Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. ... And there **he built an altar to the Lord,** who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the*

*mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he **built an altar to the Lord and called on the name of the Lord.** Gen. 12:6-8*

*And he went on his journey from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 **to the place of the altar which he had made there at first.** And **there Abram called on the name of the Lord.** Gen. 13:3-4*

Clearly Abram was a devout man who placed his relationship with God on the highest level.

## **Lot is taken in Battle**

Lot chose to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. For twelve years the five kings in the region of Sodom had been subjugated and had served Chedorlaomer but for reasons the Scriptures do not reveal, these five kings believed they had the power to throw off the yoke. While most scholars (ISBE; McKlintock & Strong) believe that Shinar is near the region of Babylon, they have never really pinpointed the exact place. At this time in history most of these kings were kings of cities and not of nations (in Joshua, Israel defeats the king of Jericho and the king of Ai (a small city), Josh 7:2-3; 8:1).

In the battle, the five kings in the region of Sodom were defeated and their possessions taken. That would have been the end of the story, except Abram's nephew, Lot and all his possessions, were also captured.

## **Abraham Rescued Lot**

Abram has been in the land long enough to have made friends and gained allies. With his own trained servants and these allies, they pursue after five kings traveling hundreds of miles to a point above Damascus.

*Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, for he dwelt by the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; and they were allies with Abram. 14 Now when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants who were born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. Gen 14:13-16*

They are victorious and manage to recapture all the people, possessions along with Lot and his possessions. At Abram's return, only the king of Sodom is mentioned as coming out to meet them. He is so pleased at the return of his people that he offered all the spoil to Abram. Abram then revealed a vow or promise he had made to God.

*Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." 22 But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the Lord, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich' — 24 except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion." Gen 14:21-24*

Abram had promised he would take nothing from the king of Sodom because he knew his character and wickedness. He did not want the king of Sodom boasting about being the one responsible for Abram's wealth. Yet although Abram did that for himself, he did not keep those who went with him from receiving their own portion.

## **Conclusion**

These are important historical details, and they reveal God's providential care of Abram, as well as Abram's bravery, generosity, and concern for the needs of his God and his family. But the most important event in all that is recorded are the words regarding Abram and Melchizedek.

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said: "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; 20 And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand." And he gave him a tithe of all. Gen 14:18-20*

## **Melchizedek - King of Salem, Priest of God Most High**

Reading through the book of Genesis, we can consider these words, and ponder them carefully. Abram meets a priest of God who is also the king of Salem. This is the first time we read of a priest in the Bible. There have been many speculations regarding this man and his role. Some have located Salem as the later Jerusalem, but there is not enough information to say that with certainty. At this point we would be ready to move on with more questions than answers, but God decided to use Melchizedek and his role with Abram as an illustration of Jesus relationship in His kingdom. Melchizedek was first a king and secondly a priest.

### **Ps 110**

It is David himself who was inspired to write the words of this Psalm that elevated the events surrounding Melchizedek and Abram to Messiah and his kingdom.

*The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool. 2 The Lord shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies! 3 Your people shall be volunteers In the day of Your power; In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning, You have the dew of Your youth. 4 The Lord has sworn And will not relent, You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek. Ps 110:1-4*

Before commenting on the Psalm, we need to get some important context.

After a long day of debating in which the Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and Lawyers were all brought to silence, Jesus finally asked them a question.

*15 Then the **Pharisees** went and plotted how they might entangle **Him in His talk**. ... 18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, "**Why do you test Me, you hypocrites?**" 23 The **same day the Sadducees**, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and **asked Him**, ... 34 But **when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together**. 35 Then **one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him**, and saying, ... 41 While the Pharisees were gathered together, **Jesus asked them**, 42 saying, "**What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?**" They said to Him, "**The Son of David**." 43 He said to them, "**How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 44 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'?" 45 If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?**" 46 And **no one was able to answer Him** a word, nor **from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore**. Mt 22:15,18, 23, 34-35; 41-46*

From this discussion several important conclusions must be drawn. First, Jesus Himself revealed that this Psalm was written by David. Second, it revealed the very thing the enemies of Jesus did not want to admit. That the Christ must be divine in order for him to be higher than his father David.

*Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. 34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The Lord said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, 35 Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" 36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." 37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:33-37*

The first part of the Psalm was written directly about deity of the coming Messiah. He would be exalted to the right hand of God as Lord and Christ. The second part of the Psalm described the special order of Melchizedek.

### **The Lord has sworn And will not relent, You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.**

While the Psalm introduced this priesthood of Melchizedek as an order and revealed that this was a decision God felt so strongly about He swore with an oath it would happen. If all we had was the passage in Genesis and this Psalm, we would still struggle for the meaning, but one of the stronger rebukes in Scripture was reserved for those Hebrew Christians who did not understand this point.

*For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. 5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek" Heb 6:1-6*

## **The Order of Aaron vs the Order of Melchizedek**

First, this is a complicated subject that is going to take some effort to understand. While the writings in Genesis seem clear enough, it was elevated to a far higher realm when God swore to make the Christ a High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

*And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. Heb 5:9-12*

There are some very important and deep spiritual truths to be learned from the passage in Genesis and Ps 110. But they are not simple truths lying on the surface. Instead they are truths that will require deep thinking and reasoning. The Spirit returned to the order of Melchizedek in the eighth chapter of Hebrews.

*For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually. 4 Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils. Heb 7:1-4*

First, the order of Melchizedek allows a man to be both a priest and a king and second, this priesthood does not require a genealogy as the order of Aaron. The Spirit here reveals that this position as revealed in Genesis made Melchizedek "like the son of God." Finally the Spirit wanted it clearly understood that the fact that Abraham gave a tenth of Melchizedek and that it was Melchizedek who blessed Abraham revealed that he was a greater person in God's eternal purpose than Abraham.

*but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives Heb 7:6-8*

## **Perfection in the Order of Melchizedek**

The fact that God spoke of another order clearly implied that there was something flawed with the levitical order and specifically the order of Aaron.

*Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. 14 For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For He testifies: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek." Heb 7:11-17*

Jesus is a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek, sitting on the right hand of the throne of God as both King of kings, Lord of lords. As he ascended to the throne of God(*sit on my right hand*), He also took the responsibility of being a priest and taking care of the sins for the people.

## **Made a Priest with an Oath**

Because the Christ was made a priest with an oath from God, there is a greater assurance to us that God will save us from our sins because he has given us a better covenant.

*And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: "The Lord has sworn And will not relent, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek"), 22 by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant. Heb 8:20-22*

## **A Priest Forever**

The final point made by the Spirit in Hebrews is the great comfort we should receive because Jesus was a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek. There is no death, no interruption of the blessings, the possibility that the new priest won't be faithful like the old. He can save to the uttermost as he is perfected forever more.

*Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. 26 For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; 27 who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. 28 For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Heb 7:23-28*

## **Abraham 4 - Faith, Ishmael, Circumcision, Sodom**

In previous discussions, God had asked Abram to leave Ur and Haran and come to the land of promise. He had promised Abram that if he would do that one thing God said He would:

<b>N I will make you a great nation</b>	<b>P I will bless you</b>
<b>P I will make your name great</b>	<b>P You shall be a blessing.</b>
<b>P I will bless those who bless you</b>	<b>P I will curse him who curses you</b>
<b>S in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed</b>	

**Personal Promises(P)** given directly to Abraham as a reward for his service.

**Nation/Posterity Promise(N)** that Abraham's seed would become a great nation and would become as the stars in heaven or the dust of the earth.

**Land Promise(L)** that Abram's descendants would be given the land of Canaan.

**Spiritual Promise(S)** that all nations of the earth would be blessed through Abram's seed.

This portion of the covenant has been ratified and confirmed. God is now bound by this covenant since Abraham did all that God had asked him to do in order to receive these things.

After Abram's return from Egypt and Lot's leaving God again appeared and said Gen 13:14-17

<b>L Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are — north, south, east, and west.</b>
<b>L All the land which you see I give to you and your descendants forever.</b>
<b>N I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth;</b>
<b>N Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."</b>

After Abraham brings back Lot victorious over the four kings, God again makes promises to Abram. This is the first of over Two Hundred times the term "the word of the LORD" is used. Here it is used to describe the promise given to Abraham like it will be delivered to many future prophets.

<b>P Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.</b>
<b>N One who will come from your own body shall be your heir. Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, So shall your descendants be.</b>
<b>L I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it.</b>
<b>N Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years.</b>
<b>N And also the nation whom they serve I will judge;</b>
<b>N afterward they shall come out with great possessions.</b>
<b>P you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age.</b>
<b>L In the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.</b>
<b>L To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates — the Kenites, the Kenezites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.</b>

### **Abram believed God**

The very essence of the gospel, God's means of saving all men is revealed here. When God makes a promise and Abram believes that promise, God takes that faith and "accounts" it as



righteousness.

*And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness. Gen 15:4-6*

The term "account" in the OT carries the thought of thinking, deeming or esteeming on the one hand and counting and calculating on the other.

chashab OT:2803, *"to think, devise, purpose, esteem, count, imagine, impute."* This word appears 123 times in the Old Testament, and *it implies any mental process involved in planning or conceiving.* ... can be translated as "devise" in association with the sense of "to think and reckon." A gifted person of God "devises" excellent works in gold and other choice objects Ex 35:35. The word may deal with evil, as when Haman "devised" an evil plot against the Jewish people Est 8:3. ... The word may mean "think." Some "thought" to do away with David by sending him against the Philistines 1 Sam 18:25; Judah "thought" Tamar to be a harlot Gen 38:15; and Eli "thought" Hannah was drunk 1 Sam 1:13. ... Translated as "count," the word is used in a number of ways. It had a *commercial connotation*, as *when land was being redeemed and the price was established*, based on the value of crops until the next year of Jubilee: "Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus..." Lev 25:27. ... *Those who seek to live for the Lord are "counted" as sheep for the slaughter* Ps 44:22. The foolish person, when he holds his peace, is "counted" as wise Prov 17:28. A theological emphasis exists in God's reward of Abraham, when the patriarch believed God and His word: "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" Gen 15:6. (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, OT 2803.)

God both esteemed and considered on the one hand and would ultimately pay the price to make it true. This is the first indication that God intended to use faith and the method and some form of payment as the means.

Paul chose this passage in Romans to explain this very thing.

*What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 4 Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. 5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, Rom 4:1-6*

It is also revealed that this was stated here not only for the purpose of revealing it about Abraham, but also about us. Just as he was accounted righteous for believing God's promise regarding his descendants and the stars of the heavens, but also to us who believe his promise regarding Jesus.

*Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:23-25*

## **Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael (Gen 16)**

At Sarai's noble and self-sacrificing (but short sighted) suggestion, Hagar is offered as a second wife to Abram. Since the seed must be of Abram's body, and she is unable to bear that seed, instead of waiting upon God, Sarah takes this step.

This is the first example of polygamy among the patriarchs. The consequences offer strong testimony as to the folly of this mode of lifestyle. Their plan to help God, but God didn't want or need their help. The only results were unhappy feelings of jealousy on the part of Sarai, and the final loss of his son to Abram when he had to be sent away after the birth of Isaac.

*Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children —*

26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. 30 Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Gal 4:21-26: 28-31

## Covenant / Sign/ Seal of Circumcision Gen 17:1-27

Abram was 75 when he first fulfilled the conditions for the covenant. At this time 24 years have passed and Abram is now 99. God again affirms the covenant but in different words:

<b>P</b>	<b>I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless.</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly.</b>		
<b>N</b>	<b>My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations.</b>		
<b>N/S</b>	<b>your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations.</b>		
<b>N/S</b>	<b>I will make you exceedingly fruitful;</b>		
<b>N/S</b>	<b>I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you.</b>		
<b>L</b>	<b>Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger,</b>		
<b>L</b>	<b>all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."</b>		
<b>Personal(P)</b>	<b>Nation/Posterity(N)</b>	<b>Land(L)</b>	<b>Spiritual(S)</b>

As the fulfillment of the promised son draws near, two very important changes occurred. First, God changed the names of both Abram and Sarai to reflect the honor he had giving them.

<b>Abram(exalted/high father)</b>	<b>became</b>	<b>Abraham(father of a multitude)</b>
<b>Sarai(princely one)</b>	<b>became</b>	<b>Sarah (princess)</b>

Second, God added circumcision. While Stephen and Genesis call it the covenant of circumcision, the later part of Genesis and Paul in Romans called it a sign and a seal.

*And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall **keep my covenant**, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 **This is my covenant**, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: **Every male among you shall be circumcised**. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and **it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you**. Gen 17:9-12*

*Then He gave him **the covenant of circumcision**; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; Acts 7:8*

*Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And **he received the sign of circumcision, a seal** of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised. Rom 4:9-12*

This was a very special and wonderful day for Abraham! The days of waiting and hoping were drawing to a close. The promised son would soon be granted. He listened carefully to God's instructions and revealed its importance by complying the same day they were given.

*So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. ... 26 That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael Gen 17:23-24, 26*

After a careful study of God's words to Abraham it is clear why he did it the same day. Circumcision was to be the token of the covenant. Every male circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin had the sign proving he had entered into a covenant with God.

*'ot* OT:226, "sign; mark." Cognates of this word appear in Aramaic and Arabic. It occurs 78 times in biblical Hebrew and in all periods of the language. ... The first occurrence of *'ot* is in Gen 1:14. Here it refers to the stars, indicators of the time of day and seasons. ... This word represents something by which a person or group is characteristically marked. ... The word means "sign" as a reminder of one's duty. This usage first appears in Gen 9:12: "This [the rainbow] is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature..." (cf. vv. 4-15). (Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, OT 226)

Just as the rainbow was a sign (same word Gen 9:12-13) that God would never flood the earth again and Moses hand and staff were a sign (same word Ex 4:8-9) to Israel that God had sent him to deliver them, even so circumcision was a sign that this person was in covenant with God. Without it, there was not only no proof of a covenant. There was no covenant. From that time forward the soul of any male who did not have the token of circumcision was cut off from Israel and had broken God's covenant.

So when Abraham received this command he considered it to be a matter of the utmost urgency. It is repeated twice that Abraham was circumcised "in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him."(Gen 17:23, 26)

Though these facts are important to us as historical information. They become much more so when we realize that a much greater circumcision is being practiced today. Every Christian is circumcised through baptism. Hence circumcision is a type of baptism just as Noah's ark was.

*In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. 13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, Col 2:11-14*

## **Hospitality to Strangers Gen 18:1-33**

*Let love of the brethren continue. 2 Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Heb 13:1-2*

The chapter opens with Abraham sitting in the door of his tent(in the shade but with hopes of a breeze), when three men appeared before him. Although Abraham did not know it, it was God, accompanied by two angels who had appeared to him in the form of men. Without any knowledge but simply seeking to practice hospitality Abraham asked if they would like to enjoy a good meal.

Sarah at 89 is asked to oversee the making of cakes while he rushes to his herd to select a good calf and have it prepared by the young men. As the men are eating the meal, one of them(the Lord) asked about Sarah.

*They said to him, "Where is Sarah your wife?" And he said, "She is in the tent." 10 The Lord said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife shall have a son." Gen 18:9-10*

This statement confirmed what God had promised in the previous chapter when he changed their names and gave the covenant of circumcision. When they used that name, it should have brought all of that to mind. Unfortunately, Sarah did not believe these words yet. Her laugh was different from Abram's in the previous chapter(and he did not laugh here).

*And Sarah was listening at the tent door behind him. 11 Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in years. The way of women had ceased to be with Sarah. 12 So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I am worn out, and my lord is old, shall I have pleasure?" Gen 18:10-12*

In a mild rebuke, Abraham is asked why Sarah laughed and she lied to cover it up.

*The Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return to you about this time next*

year, and Sarah shall have a son." 15 But Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid. He said, "No, but you did laugh." Gen 18:13-15

## **The Destruction of Sodom**

Before these "men" leave, God chose to reveal to Abraham exactly what was about to occur.

*Then the Lord said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, 21 I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." Gen 18:20-21*

God then allows Abraham to intercede in behalf of Sodom. Abraham choose to plead with God on the basis of mercy. He asked if God would consider sparing Sodom if he could find 50 righteous. God's answer reveals that God is vitally concerned about the fate of the righteous even in severe judgement.

*Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? 25 Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" 26 And the Lord said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." Gen 18:24-26*

Abraham follows this with 45, 40, 30, 20, and finally 10. God promised Abraham if he could find 10 he would spare this city. Later God modified this principle:

*If I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, 20 even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness Ezek. 14:19-20*

## **Abraham 5 - Abimelech; the Birth of Isaac; Ishmael Sent Away**

Since Abram's name was changed to Abraham when he was 99(Gen 17:1) and the birth of Isaac occurred when he was 100(Gen. 21:5), the events in Genesis 17-21 occurred in a 1 - 2 year period.

- |   |
|---|
| 1 Abraham's name changed with a promise of being a father of many nations <u>17:4-6</u>           |
| 2 Covenant of Circumcision given throughout his generations <u>17:9-14</u>                        |
| 3 Sarah's name changed and the promise she would become a mother of many nations. <u>17:15-16</u> |
| 4 The Lord appeared and revealed Isaac would soon be born and the fate of Sodom <u>18:1-33</u>    |
| 5 Journey to Gerar, the half truth of Sarah leads to severe problems for Abimelech <u>19:1-18</u> |
| 6 Birth of Isaac <u>21:1-7</u>  |

The LORD set the "*appointed time*" when He gave the promise to Abraham "*at the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.*" (KJV; NKJV; ASV). The NASB; ESV; translate "*at the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son*" (Gen. 18:14-15). So whether Abraham waited a full year(*this time next year*) or just nine months(*according to the time of life*), there was a period of time when the only reason Abraham had for trusting that he would soon have a son was his faith in God.

This period of time was very important and God closely monitored Abraham's faith. It would be a time of faith and great honor given to God or a time of weakness, lack of faith and dishonor to God. There were many reasons to doubt. Abraham was almost a hundred years old and his wife was 90. She had been barren all that time and now her womb was dead. Abraham knew all of this and even thought about it all, but he never wavered even for a moment.

*For this reason it is by faith, that it might be in accordance with grace, in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, 17 (as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the sight of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. 18 In hope against hope he believed, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which had been spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And 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; 20 yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully assured that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 Therefore also it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Rom 4:16-22*

This passage summed up the entire time from the time his name became Abraham "*A father of many nations have I made thee*" (Rom 4:17; Gen. 17:3-5) until the birth of Isaac. Even though it was against hope, Abraham had hope because he wanted to become that *father of many nations*. The Spirit was very specific in Romans details not found in Genesis. First, although he carefully assessed all the facts, he never *wavered in unbelief*. He knew his own body was now *as good as dead* since he was almost 100. He also considered *the deadness of Sarah's womb*. But the promise overruled all of that! In a scale, he weighed all the facts that were against hope against the promise of God and never *wavered in unbelief*. Abraham was fully assured that what God had promised He was able perform.

This accomplished two critically important things. First that quality and type of faith *gave glory to God*. When anyone trusts God alone, without any other reasons to do so, it gives glory to God. It places our faith above all human wisdom and all other reasons. It is faith in God's word alone that brings glory to God. Second, that quality of faith was *reckoned to him as righteousness!* When anyone trusts in God's word and God's word alone, they will have righteousness reckoned to them.

*Now not for his sake only was it written, that it was reckoned to him, 24 but for our sake also, to whom it will be reckoned, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:23-25*

All who believe in Jesus' death because of our transgressions and resurrection for our justification and who do not waver in doubt about it will have that same righteousness reckoned to them.

## **The Tragedy of Abimelech**

It is an interesting paradox that while Abraham's faith in the birth of Isaac was fixed and absolute, his confidence in God's ability to protect him until that time did not keep him from stooping to half-truths for protection. Because he told everyone that Sarah was only his sister and left out the truth that she was his wife, the King of Gerar, Abimelech took her to become his own wife.

Before matters could take a terrible turn and impact God's eternal purpose since Sarah was already pregnant with Isaac, God intervened.

*But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, "Indeed you are a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she is a man's wife." 4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, will You slay a righteous nation also? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She is my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He is my brother.' In the integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this." Gen 20:3-6*

Several important truths come out here. First, ignorance did not absolve Abimelech. Sarah was Abraham's wife and regardless of the ignorance, God held him accountable. This is why we often must pray that God forgive us even for sins of ignorance. But God had providentially intervened and kept him from this terrible sin. But in spite of this, it is a critical moment in the eternal purpose and in spite of the sin and weakness of His servant Abraham, God acted. If he did not restore Sarah to Abraham he would die.

*And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart. For I also withheld you from sinning against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 Now therefore, restore the man's wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore her, know that you shall surely die, you and all who are yours." Gen 20:6-7*

We learn another interesting fact here that is also corroborated by Job. When a true servant of the Lord commits a sin of weakness, his access to forgiveness through repentance and restored favor with God still make them superior in the sight of God than the sinner who witnessed it. Abraham was a prophet and would pray in behalf of the ignorant but sinful Abimelech. There is a strong implication of Abraham's repentance in this statement. Especially in light of the truth of the rebuke of Abimelech.

*So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." 10 Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" Gen 20:8-10*

Abraham's answer is true, but does not carry an apology which again reveals a weakness that since God overlooked also implies repentance.

*So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I offended you, that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me that ought not to be done." 10 Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?" Gen 20:8-10*

The account ends with Abraham's feeble excuse of the half-truth, Abimelech's gift to remove any stigma from the event and Abraham's praying for Abimelech.

## **The Birth of Isaac.**

The birth of Isaac is directly attributed to the direct intervention of God. "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him" (Gen, 21:1-2). At this time, the joy and happiness of the occasion is captured in the name given to the boy. There

is an important play on words in the Hebrew that can be seen in the definition of the terms.

*Yitschaq* (*yits-khawk'*); from OT:6711; laughter (i.e. mockery); *Jitschak* (or Isaac), son of Abraham: (Strong's Numbers OT:3327)

*tsachaq* (*tsaw-khak'*); a primitive root; to laugh outright (in merriment or scorn); by implication, to sport: KJV - laugh, mock, play, make sport. (Strong's Numbers OT:6711)

It began when "Abraham fell on his face and **laughed(OT:6711)**" and "God said "No, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name **Isaac(OT:3327)**." Gen. 17:17-19

Then "Sarah **laughed(OT:6711)** within herself," and "the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah **laugh(OT:6711)**," then "Sarah denied it, saying, "I did not **laugh(OT:6711)**," for she was afraid, and God replied "No, but you did **laugh(OT:6711)**!" Gen 18:12-15

At the birth, "Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, **Isaac (OT:3327)**. 4 And Abraham circumcised his son **Isaac(OT:3327)** being eight days old, as God had commanded him. 5 And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son **Isaac (OT:3327)** was born unto him. 6 And Sarah said, God hath made me to **laugh(OT:6711)**, so that all that hear will **laugh(OT:6711)** with me. ... 9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, **mocking(OT:6711)**. Gen 21:3-6, 9

## Ishmael Sent Away

The weaning of a child in those days happened at about the age of three. At that time Abraham celebrated the occasion with a great feast. But in the midst of the feast, Sarah caught a glimpse of Ishmael. Since "Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram," and "Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him" (Gen 16:16; 21:5), Ishmael would have been fourteen when Isaac was born and around seventeen when this event occurred.

What Sarah saw was Ishmael laughing(ESV), mocking(ASV), making fun of(CJB) or scoffing(NKJV). This is the same word as 6711 above and as noted in that definition, only the context could help with the exact meaning. In this case, Paul helps us understand what was in Ishmael's heart. The Holy Spirit later described this event as "persecution."

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. 29 But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Gal 4:28-30*

There was something scornful and hateful in the heart of Ishmael and God saw it as an act of persecution, similar to that of Cain with Abel, or the Jews at the time of Jesus and the early church. Sarah's response seems harsh, but perhaps she recognized the true nature of the feeling and that they could later lead to physical harm. God agreed with her assessment and told Abraham to listen to Sarah and do it. As in all commands God gave to Abraham, he got up early the next morning and did it.

*And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, scoffing. 10 Therefore she said to Abraham, "Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, namely with Isaac." 11 And the matter was very displeasing in Abraham's sight because of his son. 12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for in Isaac your seed shall be called. 13 Yet I will also make a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he is your seed." 14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Gen 21:9-14*

Paul used this event to illustrate the difference between the sons of Abraham who remained unrepentant in the preaching of the gospel and those sons of Abraham who had obeyed the gospel. All baptized believers from both Israel and the Gentiles are "like Isaac children of promise."

*Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. 23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar — 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children — 26 but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written: Gal 4:21-27*

The reason Ishmael was cast out is the same reason why God would ultimately cast off Israel in place of the church.

*Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free. Gal 4:30-31*



# Abraham 6 — God Tests Abraham

## Introduction/Review

God's test of Abraham in asking him to offer up Isaac on the altar is the third of three pivotal moments in the life of Abraham that are recorded by the Holy Spirit as examples to us who live as Christians under the New Covenant. Each of them was set forth as something we should imitate and follow. As God revealed to Isaiah, everyone seeking righteousness must look to Abraham and follow his example.

*"Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the Lord: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him." Isa 51:1-2*

Abraham is the rock from which all of us are hewn. Since his faith and life are set forth as examples of greatness in the sight of God we must be of the same substance and quality, we must look to him. If we truly follow after righteousness and truly seek for the Lord, Abraham is the way forward.

*and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, Rom 4:21-24*

*just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Gal 3:6-8*

*Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:22-24*

It is therefore very important that we know and understand exactly what Abraham did and how God felt about it along with how we too can follow these examples with our own faith and works. Although God is a friend to everyone, Abraham is the only one who was called the friend to God.

*But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the descendants of Abraham My friend. Isa. 41:8*

*Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? 2 Chr. 20:7*

*And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the "friend of God." Jas. 2:23*

Although it is imperative that we learn as much as we can about Abraham from the account of his life in Genesis 12-24, there are three important examples that are recounted in the New Testament and then give specific duties, responsibilities and doctrines as a result of them.

## 1. When God called Abraham went.

*By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:8-10*

*Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, 6 among whom **you also are the called of Jesus Christ**; Rom 1:5-6*

*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, **to those who are the called according to His purpose**. 29 For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 **Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified**; and whom He justified, these He also*

glorified. Rom 8:28-30

and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 **even us whom He called**, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Rom 9:23-24

God is faithful, by whom **you were called into the fellowship of His Son**, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Cor 1:9

but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, 24 but **to those who are called**, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Cor 1:23-25

I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to **walk worthy of the calling with which you were called**,... 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as **you were called in one hope of your calling**; Eph 4:1, 4

that you would walk worthy of God **who calls you into His own kingdom and glory**. 1 Th 2:12

to which **He called you by our gospel**, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Th 2:14-15

**who has saved us and called us with a holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, 2 Tim 1:9-10

Therefore, holy brethren, **partakers of the heavenly calling**, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, Heb 3:1-2

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, **that those who are called** may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. Heb 9:15

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him **who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**; 10 who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy. 1Pet 2:9-10

But may the God of all grace, **who called us to His eternal glory by Christ** Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. 1 Peter 5:10-11

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to **make your call and election sure**, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 2 Peter 1:10-11

Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, **To those who are called**, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: Jude 1

## **2. When God made an Impossible Promise he believed.**

(as it is written, "I have made you a father of many nations") in the presence of Him whom he believed-- God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; 18 who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, "So shall your descendants be." 19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah's womb. 20 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness." 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, 25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification. Rom 4:17-25

From this man's seed, **according to the promise**, God raised up for Israel a Savior—Jesus— Acts 13:23-24

And we declare to you glad tidings — **that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus.** Acts 13:32-33

And now I stand and am judged **for the hope of the promise made by God to our fathers.** Acts 26:6

**He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, 21 and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform. 22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.” 23 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. Rom. 4:20-24**

Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, **are children of promise.** Gal. 4:28-29

by which have been given to us **exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature,** having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2Pet. 1:4

And **this is the promise that He has promised us** — eternal life. 1 John 2:25

### **3. When God Made an Impossible Demand and He Fulfilled it.**

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. James 2:21-24

For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. Heb. 6:13-18

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. Heb 11:17-19

### **God Tests Abraham**

The term test has different meanings throughout the Bible. Some tests are good while others are evil. We are generally accustomed to see temptation as an evil thing and tests as a good thing. While this generally holds true, not all translators have followed this. So it is better to see the terms in the light of who is testing. When God tests it is always a good thing with God’s hope that we will pass that test. God never tempts or tests for an evil outcome, nor does He use evil as a means of testing.

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Jas. 1:13-15

This test is a test of good following the same example of what God himself would do. There was nothing evil in this test.

*nāsâ* test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof, put to the test. (Other renderings infrequently found: ASV adventure, proveth ; RSV make a test, attempt, venture, be used to; ASV and RSV make trial.) ... *massâ* ... trial, test, proving. Used also as a place name (Massah) where the “trial” over water happened in the wilderness (cf. Ex 17:1-7). In most contexts has the idea of testing or proving the quality of someone or something, often through adversity or hardship. The rendering tempt, used frequently by the AV and ASV, generally means prove, test, put to the test, rather than the current English idea of “entice to do wrong.” The verb *nāsâ* occurs 36 times in the OT. (TWOT OT:5254)

Even when it is for good purposes, God never allows one to be tempted above what he can accomplish. God knew Abraham was up to this test, just as He knew Jesus was up to it in the garden of Gethsemane.

## **Take Your Only Son Isaac and Offer Him as a Burnt Offering**

Most of us can understand this as it relates to a father and a son. How difficult it would be to take someone you love and offer them. Yet though even under this fundamental level this would be a great test, it was not really the issue. The most vital aspects of God's promises to Abraham could only be fulfilled with Isaac. How was Abraham to become a great nation and the father of many nations without Isaac? How would all nations of the earth be blessed without this seed? Everything Abraham had done for God up to this point was summed up in Isaac. If Abraham does what God commands here, he will lose everything, and everything he has done in service to God and all the sacrifices he has made would be for nothing. Not only this, but all the promises God has given to Abraham would be violated if he does this deed. He could have gotten angry and thrown a tantrum. He could have worked like a lawyer and challenged God's wisdom and honor in asking him to do this thing. He did none of these things. Instead Abraham got up the next morning and went.

*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 the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. Gen. 22:3-4*

Another element of this is that it was not quick. Abraham had to go out and cut the wood and he had to travel for a few days. As he rode on his donkey and watched the miles pass, he had plenty of time to consider the implications of what he had been asked to do. He also had at least three nights to pray and meditate on it. In his conversations with Isaac and the men, things would have arisen that might have tempted him to discuss this matter. But just as he never wavered when God promised this son, he never wavered at the need to fulfill this command.

Abraham had one defense that he must have quoted over and over again. After I offer him, God will raise him from the dead. Surely God will raise him from the dead. God will have to raise him from the dead.

*By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, 18 of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," 19 concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense. Heb 11:17-19*

## **Abraham and Isaac Go to the Mountain Alone**

As the long trip comes to a close and the distant mountain becomes clearer, Abraham asked the two men who had accompanied them to remain with the donkey while he and Isaac completed the journey on foot. Clearly Abraham had given careful thought to these events and did not want to give the men an opportunity to interfere. It is important to note that Abraham used "we" not to deceive, but by his faith that "God would raise him from the dead."

*5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you." Gen 22:5*

As they left the young men behind, Isaac is carrying the wood and Abraham is carrying the fire and a knife. There is no indication how much time had passed from Isaac being weaned until this event. He is clearly old enough to carry the wood and to understand the nature of sacrifice. His question about the "lamb for a burnt offering" must have cut Abraham's heart. His answer reveals his faith and his tact.

*6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" 8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering." So the two of them went together. Gen 22:6-8*

The time finally arrived when Abraham had to make the decision final. He was not in the right place, and he built an altar. From later instructions it is clear that God did not want elaborate altars. It was made of earth or unhewn stones.

*An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. 25 And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. Ex 20:24-26*

## **Abraham Prepares to Sacrifice Isaac**

After the altar was complete, He placed the wood properly and all was ready. At that moment Isaac must have become very alarmed. First Abraham tied him up so he could not resist, then he laid him on the altar. One can only imagine Isaacs wide eyes and pleas and the torment in Abraham's heart as he reached for the knife, picked it up and made the final decision that he would complete what God had asked him to do.

*9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. Gen. 22:9-10*

This was the moment God had waited for and there was no longer any doubt. Man's free will could have led Abraham to change his mind at any moment in the journey and preparation, but there was no longer any opportunity to change his mind. Abraham had passed the point of obedience and there was no need for it to go any further. So the "Angel of the Lord" stopped him at the moment when he picked up the knife. It is not stated whether both Abraham and Isaac heard these words, but it would have been a blessing for Isaac to hear them and to know why Abraham had done this.

*11 But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." 12 And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." Gen. 22:11*

The expression "now I know" illustrates James words regarding faith and works. Up until that very moment Abraham's faith could have faltered. Up to the very moment when he picked up the knife and determined to give no more thought was going to fulfill God's command, Abraham could have changed his mind and rebelled against the command.

*But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? 22 Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? 23 And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And he was called the friend of God. 24 You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. Jas. 2:20-24*

## **Abraham named the Place the-LORD-will-Provide**

Since it was not until that moment that those words were spoken, it is not until that moment that faith is genuine faith. When that moment arrived God provided the way of escape. For as Abraham lifted up his eyes from Isaac he looked and saw a ram caught in a thicket, waiting for Abraham to come and take him. One can only dimly imagine the feelings Abraham must have felt at that moment as the words of the Angel and the sight of the ram brought the new set of circumstances into Abraham's consciousness. Isaac was safe, He had been trusting and obedient and a ram had now been provided to fulfill the words he had spoken to Isaac.

*Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, "In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided." Gen. 22:13-14*

## **By Myself I have Sworn says the LORD**

After Abraham untied Isaac and took him off the altar, tied up the ram and put him on the altar and offered him as a burnt offering, the Angel of the LORD spoke again. This time he revealed to Abraham (and Isaac?) the great favor that God now felt toward him. God had sworn with an oath by Himself

*Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son — 17 blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." Gen. 22:15-18*

The power of this event is captured by the Hebrew writer. Abraham left Ur with a simple covenant promise from God that he would make him a great nation. He lived by faith in Canaan from the age of 75 until this moment trusting in the promise of God.

*For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. 19 This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, Heb 6:13-20*

But with this act, God wanted to give something greater. So "God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath." Just as Paul had said in Romans, "Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, 24 but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead," (Rom. 4:23-25) These things were spoken for Abraham, for his fleshly offspring and for his spiritual offspring.

God wanted to show the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel. **IT WOULD NEVER CHANGE!** Because of two immutable things.

## **TWO IMMUTABLE THINGS:**

1. God made a **promise** to Abraham
2. God **swore/confirmed** it with an **oath**(an end to all dispute!).

Then stamped over both of these: **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO LIE**

This the basis of the hope which is the anchor of the soul that enters into the veil and ties us directly to God. God first made a promise(*and it is impossible for God to lie*). Then God swore with an oath in his own name that he would keep that promise(*and it is impossible for God to lie*). By these two(and really three) immutable things, we have strong assurance and hope.

## **Sarah's Death**

About thirty years later, God records the death of Sarah. She was ninety when Isaac was born, so Isaac would be about thirty-seven.

*Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; these were the years of the life of Sarah. 2 So Sarah died in Kirjath Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her. Gen 23:1-2*

Abraham then purchased the cave of Machpelah. For his entire life, Abraham had sojourned in the land of Canaan with no property. But after the death of Sarah, God recorded in detail the purchase of the one piece of property in Canaan that Abraham owned, a place to bury his dead.

*in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. 31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. Gen 49:30-32*

# Isaac, Jacob, and Esau

## Sarah's Death

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## Isaac's wife Rebekah

After the death of Sarah, with Isaac nearing the age of forty, Abraham takes thought for a wife for Isaac. Perhaps it was his own assessment of the moral standards of the inhabitants of Canaan or maybe knowing God that would dispossess them of their land he makes his servant swear by the Name of the LORD, he will not take a wife from them.

*"Please, put your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you swear by the Lord, the God of heaven and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 but you shall go to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac." Gen 24:2-4*

This was Abraham's chief steward to whom he had set over and "who ruled over all that he had." So to the best and most trusted of all he knew Abraham entrusted the important task for finding the woman through whom all of God's promises regarding the seed would come.

Since this is a journey of many days, the servant wants an exact idea of Abraham's expectations. If he can't find one, is he to take Isaac back to look for himself? Abraham's strong response revealed that was out of the question. But Abraham expressed his strong conviction that God would send an angel to lead the way and make the journey prosperous, but not being presumptuous, he informs the servant that he will be blameless if he could not find a woman.

The city to which the servant journeyed was Haran in Mesopotamia about 300 miles away. The journey passes in silence and having arrived at Haran at the time when the women go out to draw the water, he offers a prayer to God for help in finding the woman who would become Isaac's wife.

*"O Lord God of my master Abraham, please give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, here I stand by the well of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink' — let her be the one You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master." Gen 24:12-14*

Even before he had finished the prayer, Rebekah arrived. She is described as: "the young woman was very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her." (Gen. 24:16). When he first saw her, "the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher." (Gen. 24:17). Everything he had requested in the prayer, she fulfilled and in gratitude for her actions, he gave her a gold nose ring and two bracelets of gold. When he asked her of her lineage, all that he had hoped for was fulfilled and he worshiped God for His intervention.

*"Whose daughter are you? Tell me, please, is there room in your father's house for us to lodge?" 24 So she said to him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." 25*

Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge." 26 Then the man bowed down his head and worshiped the Lord. Gen 24:23-26

As he expressed his thanks to God out loud she overheard them and ran to tell her family.

And he said, "Blessed be the Lord God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the Lord led me to the house of my master's brethren." 28 So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things. Gen 24:27-28

With the subsequent history bearing out the covetous attitude of her brother Laban, and the wording here, it is easy to question Laban's sincerity. After entering the home, unloading the camels, and taken care of their needs, food is brought to him, but he can't eat because his duty to Abraham is pressing upon him.

Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. 33 Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." Gen. 24:32-33

With a few additional explanations regarding Abraham's welfare he sets forth his commission exactly as Abraham had given it to him. He also relates to them his prayer to God and how Rebekah had acted. He then made his request.

And I bowed my head and worshiped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. 49 Now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." Gen 24:48-49

Both Laban and Bethuel respond exactly as they should.

Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, "The thing comes from the Lord; we cannot speak to you either bad or good. 51 Here is Rebekah before you; take her and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the Lord has spoken." Gen 24:50-51

But when the servant seeks to leave the next day, they ask that she might remain with them a few days to say their farewells. The servant knows what Abraham is enduring with the passing days and refuses to delay. When they defer to Rebekah, she agrees to go that very day.

And he said to them, "Do not hinder me, since the Lord has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master." 57 So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?" And she said, "I will go." 59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. Gen 24:56-60

The return journey is also passed over in silence, but when they arrive, Isaac is meditating in the field and sees them approaching. When Rebekah saw Isaac and learned who he was in modesty she put on a veil and the servant recounted all the details to Isaac and she became his wife.

And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels were coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who is this man walking in the field to meet us?" The servant said, "It is my master." So she took a veil and covered herself. 66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother's death. Gen 24:63-67

## **The Final Days of Abraham**

The final years of Abraham after burying Sarah and choosing a wife for Isaac are summed up in his remarriage to Keturah and the offspring she bore him. Always thinking ahead with wisdom, he while he had given gifts to his later sons the Scripture makes it clear that Abraham gave "all that he had to Isaac."

And Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the country of the east. Gen 25:5-6

After these final words we read of his death.



*This is the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years, and was gathered to his people. 9 And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, 10 the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. Gen 25:7-10*

So God had called Abraham when he was seventy-five allowed Abraham to live 100 years in the promised land.

75	Entered the Promised land	<u>12:4</u>
86	Birth of Ishmael	<u>16:16</u>
99	God promised Isaac's birth	<u>17:1</u>
100	Isaac Born	<u>21:5</u>

127	Sarah Died	<u>23:1</u>
140	Isaac Marries Rebekah	<u>25:20</u>
160	Jacob and Esau Born	<u>25:26</u>
175	Abraham Died	<u>25:7</u>

## **Birth of Esau and Jacob**

As noted above, Isaac was forty when he married Rebekah, and she remained childless for many years. After Isaac's pleas, God intervened and allowed him to have a son.

*Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian. 21 Now Isaac pleaded with the Lord for his wife, because she was barren; and the Lord granted his plea, and Rebekah his wife conceived. Gen. 25:20-21*

After she conceived, the twins continued wrestling caused her great concern. She inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered her query.

*But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If all is well, why am I like this?" So she went to inquire of the Lord. 23 And the Lord said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, Two peoples shall be separated from your body; One people shall be stronger than the other, And the older shall serve the younger." Gen 25:22-23*

Later, the Holy Spirit would reveal the true significance of this statement for us today. After Israel's downfall at the cross and the dismal response from Israel to God's pleas to return through Christ and the gospel, Paul expressed his deep sorrow. "I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh (Rom 9:2-3)." But God wanted it clearly understood that this was not a surprise. It was not something that in any way reflected on His plan. He had known from the beginning that this would be the case.

*But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, 7 nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." 8 That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. Rom 9:6-8*

It was always going to be God who selected the quality of character that would make up His people. It was always God who selected the children. Never just of the flesh, but of the promise. So Isaac was chosen over Ishmael and Jacob over Esau.

*And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac 11 (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." Rom 9:10-13*

Many have misunderstood verse 13 as being spoken at the birth of the children when it is actually quoted after the fact in the book of Malachi. The truth is what God foresaw and foretold was the fact by the time of Malachi. Jacob and his offspring were more spiritually minded and better suited to the promise than Esau. Yet even among the offspring of Jacob (Israel), the same process was being fulfilled with each person.

*What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the*

*riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Rom 9:22-24*

As each infant was born, the process continued. There were vessels of mercy, like Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David etc. There were also vessels of wrath as Korah, all who left Egypt except Joshua and Caleb, etc. Each man and woman made themselves vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy by the choices they made. Not only was that true of Israel, but also of the Gentiles. God had made that clear through Hosea and Isaiah.

*even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? 25 As He says also in Hosea: "I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved." 26 "And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, ' You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." 27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. 28 For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the Lord will make a short work upon the earth." 29 And as Isaiah said before: "Unless the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah." Rom 9:24-29*

Hosea told Israel God would call these vessels of mercy "My people who were not My people." referring to the vessels of mercy among both Israel and the Gentiles. No one is fixed! Vessels of wrath can become vessels of mercy. For "where it was said to them, ' You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God." Isaiah reported the dismal truth that if God had not needed Israel for the coming seed even in the days of Isaiah (and many other times as well) they would have become like Sodom and Gomorrah. For though Israel numbered as the sand of the sea, only a remnant would be saved.

Details of the birth centered on two things. First the appearance of Esau. He had so much hair that he looked like a "hairy garment" and the hair color was red. Second was Jacob hold on to Esau's heel.

*And the first came out red. He was like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name Esau. 26 Afterward his brother came out, and his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so his name was called Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them. 27 So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. Gen 25:25-28*

The names reflected these two things. They called them Esau (red) and Jacob (heel-catcher, supplanter). Their characters were also different. Esau was a skillful hunter and "outdoorsman" who liked to be outside and enjoyed knowing and pitting himself against the elements and the animals. Jacob was a mild man, a man of peace who enjoyed what could be done inside a home, meditating, reading, learning.

These characteristics led to a terrible favoritism in which Isaac loved Esau and favored him (wanted to give him the blessing in spite of the clear prophesy that the older would serve the younger) and Rebekah loved Jacob (so much she was willing to lie and deceive her husband to get the blessing for him).

# Jacob & Esau

## Esau Sells the Birthright

The only real account we have of their youth centered first on the fact that Esau was a hunter and an outdoorsman while Jacob like to remain in the tent and was a mild man. The only reference we have to his mildness is in his cooking a red stew.

*So the boys grew. And Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. 28 And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob. 29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. 30 And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." Therefore his name was called Edom. Gen 25:27-30*

The details are simple, Esau is hungry, Jacob has the food to satisfy the hunger. Instead of simply giving it to him, Jacob uses this occasion to tempt Esau to give up his birthright. It manifests a lack of faith on his part since God had already promised the elder would serve the younger, but like Sarah with Hagar, it appears that Jacob was going to take matters into his own hands.

*But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." 32 And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" 33 Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. Gen 25:31-34*

Esau's conduct in all this manifested a complete lack of concern for the spiritual aspects of this birthright. Later the Spirit would reveal that this showed his profane and worldly character.

*looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears. Heb 12:15-17*

## Jacob Steals Esau's Blessing

There are four characters in this unfolding drama. In these events, character flaws are seen in all of them. Perhaps the least guilty is Isaac who, beginning to feel the affects of old age, began to move toward the future. He wants to have his affairs settled. There are so many things that we can't answer here. Did Isaac know Esau had sold his birthright. Did he know the prophecy given about the children at birth? Scripture does not reveal any of these things. But it does reveal that Jacob was manifesting his faith in the promise God had given when he did these things.

*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. Heb 11:20*

Rebekah's and Jacob's characters are shown in a very negative light. They are both guilty of blatant deception even to the point of invoking God. Esau's decision to kill Jacob also reflects his ungodly and worldly attitude.

The event begins with the request from Isaac for Esau to bring him some food that would lift up his soul and lead him to give a blessing.

*Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I do not know the day of my death. 3 Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 And make me savory food, such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die." Gen 27:2-4*

Rebekah overheard the conversation and decided to intervene in behalf of her favored son Jacob. But she brings him into the scheme from the beginning. He is to get two choice kids, knowing that he would be taking it to his father and deceiving him into getting the blessing.

*Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring it. 6 So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 7 'Bring me game and make savory food for me, that I may eat it and*

*bleed you in the presence of the Lord before my death.’ 8 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to what I command you. 9 Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. 10 Then you shall take it to your father, that he may eat it, and that he may bless you before his death.” Gen 27:5-10*

It appears that Jacob’s only objection to the plan is the worldly sorrow of getting caught. God lays out the facts and leave us to draw the conclusions.

*And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, “Look, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth-skinned man. 12 Perhaps my father will feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring a curse on myself and not a blessing.” 13 But his mother said to him, “Let your curse be on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get them for me.” Gen 27:11-14*

With the food made, the second part of the deception is to make Isaac believe that Jacob is Esau. To accomplish this, Jacob is decked out in an outlandish costume. First, Esau’s clothes are brought and Jacob puts them on. Rebekah then cuts up the skins of the young goats she had made into the food and places them on Jacobs hands/forearms and neck. So Jacob enters into the presence of his father with food he did not cook, clothing that was not his and the skins of animals strategically placed.

*And he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and his mother made savory food, such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob. Gen 27:14-17*

### **The way of the transgressor is hard. (Pr. 13:15)**

Nothing about this deception goes easy and Jacob is forced to repeatedly lie.

1. He is directly asked if he is Esau and he had to answer in the affirmative.
2. He is asked how he got the game so quickly and affirms that God helped him.
3. He is asked to come near and be examined whether he was really Esau or not.
4. He is asked again are you really my son Esau.

*So he went to his father and said, “My father.” And he said, “Here I am. Who are you, my son?” 19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, that your soul may bless me.” 20 But Isaac said to his son, “How is it that you have found it so quickly, my son?” And he said, “Because the Lord your God brought it to me.” 21 Isaac said to Jacob, “Please come near, that I may feel you, my son, whether you are really my son Esau or not.” 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, “The voice is Jacob’s voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau.” 23 And he did not recognize him, because his hands were hairy like his brother Esau’s hands; so he blessed him. 24 Then he said, “Are you really my son Esau?” He said, “I am.” Gen 27:18-24*

Most people with a tender conscience would have been overwhelmed at some point by so many questions, but Jacob hardens his heart and carries out the deception to the bitter end and receives the blessing. The pressure of Esau’s imminent return must have also weight heavy on his mind since as soon as he was done, Esau returned.

### **Isaac’s Blessing**

After reading through the blessing it is clear that Isaac intended to make Esau the sole beneficiary of both God’s covenant blessings and his own possessions. Later when Esau asked if anything had been reserved for him, it is clear that Isaac had left nothing for Jacob.

*Therefore may God give you Of the dew of heaven, Of the fatness of the earth, And plenty of grain and wine. 29 Let peoples serve you, And nations bow down to you. Be master over your brethren, And let your mother’s sons bow down to you. Cursed be everyone who curses you, And blessed be those who bless you!” ... 37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, “Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with grain and wine I have sustained him. What shall*

*I do now for you, my son?" Gen 27:28-29, 37*

## **Esau's Bitter Despair and Terrible Decision**

As noted above, Jacob made his escape in the nick of time.

*Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. Gen 27:30-31*

After catching the game and preparing it himself he brings it to his now full and satisfied father. He triumphantly announced his presence and success and eagerly awaits his father's proud and excited response. How his heart fell as he heard his father's bitter response.

*And his father Isaac said to him, "Who are you?" So he said, "I am your son, your firstborn, Esau." 33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him — and indeed he shall be blessed." Gen 27:32-33*

As Esau heard the terrible truth, his heart falls into despair and he sought to receive whatever was left.

*When Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me — me also, O my father!" 35 But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing." ... 38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me — me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice and wept Gen 27:34-35, 38*

But, Isaac now reaped as he had sown. Just as he had sought to take away everything from Jacob, he now had nothing left to give Esau. Hearing the meager blessing, Esau's bitterness turned to hatred and the decision to murder and thus regain what he had lost.

*So Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, "The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then I will kill my brother Jacob." Gen 27:41*

## **Rebekah sends Jacob to Laban**

When Rebekah hears of Esau's plans, several ideas come into her mind. First, that given time Esau would forget his anger and so the best solution was to send Jacob away for a time. With the terrible attitudes and morals of Esau's wives, that made her life so bitter, she wanted to find a wife for Jacob who would better accord with her own.

*When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah. Gen 26:34-35*

*And Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these who are the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?" Gen 27:46*

## **Jacob Gains Wives, Children and Flocks(Gen. 28-33)**

### **Jacob Makes a Vow(Gen 28:10-22)**

On his way to Haran, he stopped at Bethel for the night. This was near where Abraham had camped after his arrival in Canaan and he built an altar there(Gen. 12:8; 13:3). God revealed His work on earth in a dream with a ladder and angels moving up and down on it. Then the Lord appeared to him above the ladder and renewed the covenant promise with Jacob. It is very probable that Jacob had repented of his lies since God spoke in this manner. He promised to care for Jacob no matter where he travels and bring him back safely. After Jacob awoke, he used the stone he had slept on as a pillar and poured out oil upon it to consecrate it. He then made a vow to make a house for God in Bethel and to give a tenth of all he gained on his journey to God, thus following Abraham's example with Melchizedek(Gen. 14:20).

## **Jacob Arrives in Haran and Serves 14 years(Gen. 29:1-35)**

The similarity of the events between Abraham's servant choosing Rebekah and Jacob's arrival and meeting Rachel are strikingly similar. For he meets Rachel at the well on the first day of his arrival. As soon as Rachel knows who he is she runs to get Laban, who hurries to meet Jacob and bring him into his home. After a month of service, Laban offers to pay Jacob whatever wages he chooses and Jacob asked for Rachel.

The pronunciation of their names is given in two distinct ways. Rachel(raw-khale' or ραχηλ and Leah (lay-aw' or Lee-aah). Either pronunciation is acceptable, although we are accustomed to the latter.

After seven years Laban deceived Jacob giving him Leah instead of Rachael. After awakening he finds he is next to Leah instead of Rachel. One has to wonder if he ever saw the similarity between what he had done to his own father. But certainly "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap*" (Gal. 6:7). Instead of an apology, Laban makes light of it and demands another seven years of labor in order to then earn the right to Rachel.

Another very unhappy home is established when Jacob shows blatant favoritism to Rachel over Leah. God took note of it and blessed Leah with four boys in succession. Rachel cannot have children so she gives her servant Bilhah and she conceives two boys. Leah then gives her servant Zilpah who also has two boys. Leah then had a fifth son and a sixth and his only daughter. Finally Rachel has a son and on the journey back to Canaan dies in childbirth with her final son.

*Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: 23 the sons of Leah were Reuben, Jacob's firstborn and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; 24 the sons of Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin; 5 the sons of Bilhah Rachel's maidservant, were Dan and Naphtali; 26 and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant were Gad and Asher. These were the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram. Gen. 35:22-26*

<b><u>Leah</u></b>	<b><u>Rachel</u></b>	<b><u>Bilhah,(Rachel's servant)</u></b>	<b><u>Zilpah(Leah's servant)</u></b>
Reuben, Judah,	Joseph	Dan	Gad
Simeon, Issachar	Benjamin	Naphtali	Asher
Levi, Zebulun			

After the birth of these children Jacob determines to leave but Laban offers to give him some livestock if he will serve him for another seven years. Laban has noted that Jacob has-brought great riches to him.

*And Laban said to him, "Please stay, if I have found favor in your eyes, for I have learned by experience that the Lord has blessed me for your sake." 28 Then he said, "Name me your wages, and I will give it." 29 So Jacob said to him, "You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. 30 For what you had before I came was little, and it has increased to a great amount; the Lord has blessed you since my coming. And now, when shall I also provide for my own house?" Gen. 30:27-30*

The agreement they strike involved the colors of the animals. It began with the solid colored goats going to Laban and the speckled and spotted going to Jacob and the white sheep going to Laban and the brown to Jacob.

*And Jacob said "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me I will again feed and keep your flocks: 32 Let me pass through all your flock today removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages. Gen. 30:31-33*

Although this is how it began Jacob complained bitterly at the end of Laban's changes.

*Yet your father has deceived me and changed my wages ten times, but God did not allow him to hurt me. 8 If he said thus: 'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. Gen. 31:7-8*

*Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and*

*six years for your flock, and you have changed my wages ten times. 42 Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night." Gen. 31:4-42*

The events describing Jacob's use of rods has created speculation as to its power. While the older commentaries suggest there was some power to this later ones consider it as an idea that had no real power. The truth is-that God did this for Jacob and even he admitted it later. He may have learned as Balaam did that if he just left it to God it would all be resolved in his favor anyway.

*If he said thus: The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9 So God has taken away the livestock of your father and given them to me. Gen. 31:8*

*Then the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said 'Here I am.' 12 And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks are streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13 I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family." Gen. 31:11-13*

## **Jacob Returned to Canaan(Gen. 31:1-55)**

After it became evident God was going to bless Jacob regardless of the type of sheep they agreed upon, Laban's sons became bitter and jealous and God revealed to Jacob it was time to leave.

*Now Jacob heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this wealth." 2 And Jacob saw the countenance of Laban, and indeed it was not favorable toward him as before. 3 Then the Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will be with you." Gen. 31:1-3*

Whether it was right for Jacob to leave in the manner he chose is not recorded, but he clearly did not trust Laban and left without telling him. He first speaks to Rachel and Leah and they seem to have the same frustrated attitude as Jacob showed later. Yet they seem to have the same mercenary and selfish spirit as their father.

Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15 Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16 For all these riches which God has taken from our father are really ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it." Gen. 31:14-16

The one bitter note that brought great sorrow later to Israel was Rachel's idolatry that may have later infected the nation. "Rachel had-stolen the household idols that were her father's" (Gen 31:19).

*And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Your fathers, including Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of the River in old times; and they served other gods... 14 "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Josh. 24:2 14-15*

Although it might have turned out otherwise, God appeared to Laban and warned him not to touch Jacob.

Laban's anger then settled on the stolen gods. But Rachel's guile and deception kept Laban from finding them, in the meanwhile, Jacob's anger boiled over and he chided Laban for his mistreatment(Gen. 31:36-41).

*Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked you last night." Gen. 31:42*

Laban is thwarted and decides the best he can do is make a covenant with Jacob and left.

## **Esau and Jacob Reunited in Peace(Gen 32-33)**

Jacob sends a message, probably hoping that 20 years would be enough to cool his brother's anger, but after learning that Esau is coming with four hundred men to meet him, fears the worst and even God's promises are not enough, as he takes matters into his own hands by dividing up his family from least to most favored, which had to hurt and may have later been another reason for the brothers extreme dislike of Joseph.

As he awaits the coming of Esau the event that changed his name to Israel occurred. How this matter of wrestling began is left silent, but Jacob knows this "man" had the power to bless him and he would not let him go until he did so.

Jacob then meets Esau and the reunion is a happy one. Although Esau wants to help Jacob travel the remaining part of the journey, Jacob refused and they parted friends. After returning, Jacob chose to purchase some land and dwelt in what would later be called Shechem.



# Joseph

## Review

Jacob had been with Laban about 14 years when Joseph was born to Rachel. He had already seen the births of ten sons and a daughter and after Joseph was born, he prepared to leave, but Laban prevailed upon him to work for another six years.

*And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go to my own place and to my country. 26 Give me my wives and my children for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you." Gen. 30:25-26*

*Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, Gen. 31:41*

So Joseph was about 7 years old when they returned to the land of Canaan. During the ten year period before he was sold into slavery, he witnessed the defilement of Dinah and the murder of an entire town by her brothers, Simeon and Levi(Gen. 34). He also saw his father return to Bethel where he collected and buried all the idols that had infected the family(Gen. 35:1-4). He was aware that God changed his father's name to Israel(Gen. 35:9-15), and experienced the death of his mother(Gen. 35:16-10). All of these things molded and created his character.

God had already told Abraham that his descendants would become servants in another land for four hundred years. When the time arrived that this should happen, *Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. ...16 for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."* Gen. 15:13-16

God chose Joseph to bring it about.

*Moreover He called for a famine in the land; He destroyed all the provision of bread. 17 He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him. 20 The king sent and released him, The ruler of the people let him go free. 21 He made him lord of his house, And ruler of all his possessions, 22 To bind his princes at his pleasure, And teach his elders wisdom. Ps. 105:16-22*

## Joseph - Dreams & Sold as a Slave

The account begins with Joseph "*bringing a bad report*" of his brothers to their father." In itself this could be either a good or a bad thing depending upon whether he was trying to help them or just get them into trouble. But the problem of favoritism that began with Isaac now continues with his son Jacob.

*Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age. Also he made him a tunic of many colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him. Gen. 37:3-4*

The real issue here was not the tattling, it was the obvious preference and gift giving. Joseph was the son of the loved wife, while the rest were sons of the unloved wife or the servants of both wives.

The dreams are fascinating. Since they came true, and also dreams became the means by which it all occurred, it is impossible to think that they were simple dreams. These were revelations from God. Whether it was wise and mature for him to have told these dreams to his brothers under these circumstances is doubtful, but how could a 17 year old have such wisdom. The dreams clearly revealed his pre-eminence, first over his brothers and second, over all Israel.

*And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Gen. 37:8*

*Then he dreamed still another dream ... 10 So he told it to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And his brothers envied him, but*

his father kept the matter in mind. Gen. 37:9-11

The brothers were filled with hatred and envy over the dreams and these lusts became the motivation that led first to a desire to slay and finally to the desire to sell him into slavery.

*Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, they conspired against him to kill him. 19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this dreamer is coming! 20 Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!" 21 But Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill him." And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit which is in the wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him" — that he might deliver him out of their hands, and bring him back to his father. Gen. 37:18-22*

Reuben is the only one who controlled his emotions and sought to avert the sin. He was prepared to bring him back to his father, but circumstances took that opportunity away from him with the coming of the traders.

*And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a company of Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry them down to Egypt. 26 So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is there if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother and our flesh." And his brothers listened. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by; so the brothers pulled Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt. Gen. 37:25-28*

The problem of Jacob's inquiries and concerns was "solved" with a lie of omission.

*So they took Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood. 32 Then they sent the tunic of many colors, and they brought it to their father and said, "We have found this. Do you know whether it is your son's tunic or not?" 33 And he recognized it and said, "It is my son's tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters arose to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For I shall go down into the grave to my son in mourning." Thus his father wept for him. Gen. 37:31-35*

One can only wonder and consider the grave difficulty these brothers placed themselves in when they tried to comfort him over death of his son when he was not actually dead at all. But even if they admitted it, they probably assumed they would never be able to find him again.

## **Joseph bought by Potiphar**

God took control of this situation by giving Joseph favor in the eyes of Potiphar. God did this by blessing everything that Joseph did. The more authority Potiphar gave him, the greater the blessings came to Potiphar. It was not long until Joseph was head over everything to Potiphar. Whether Joseph could see this favor in his circumstances and was comforted by it, or whether he was so crushed down by the unfairness of the situation is not revealed.

*Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. 2 The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord made all he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house, and all that he had he put under his authority. Gen. 39:1-4*

Although things are going very well for Joseph in his work, it is not long before a terrible temptation was placed before him and though he resisted it steadfastly, it still brought about terrible consequences.

*And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Gen. 39:7-9*

Joseph is not at home where pressure to do right was present. He was not under any real pressure at all except one. “*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*” Joseph loved God and could not sin before his eyes. God was in his presence in his heart and soul to such a degree that any sin could not be done without a sense of great loss in disappointing God.

This is a classic example of indwelling by faith and of the true nature of godliness. God was inside, directing and guiding his heart, mind and conscience and he could not commit this act of sin because of it.

But Potiphar’s wife is not one to be discouraged so day by day she sought out means to entice him, but Joseph remained fixed in his mind to resist.

*So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her. Gen. 39:10*

But his integrity cost him his liberty again, for this woman scorned became a bitter opponent (39:16-18) and she chose to lie to Potiphar. One has to wonder if Potiphar knew the truth, but couldn’t face it. He would certainly have found out later when Pharaoh allowed him to be ruler over the entire land.

## **Joseph in Prison**

Once again, God took a hand by giving him favor with the keeper of the prison. Doubtless it was done the same way as with Potiphar and soon he was running the prison as he had run Potiphar’s house.

*But the Lord was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph’s hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing. 23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that was under Joseph’s authority, because the Lord was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made it prosper. Gen. 39:21-23*

## **The Dreams of the Butler and Baker**

We are not told how long Joseph was in the prison, but after some time two of Pharaoh’s great officers who had very important duties and were close to Pharaoh somehow offended him and made him angry. The keeper of the guard put Joseph in charge of their care and in that way Joseph was in the position to hear and to interpret their dreams.

*Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who were confined in the prison, had a dream, both of them, each man’s dream in one night and each man’s dream with its own interpretation. 6 And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they were sad. 7 So he asked Pharaoh’s officers who were with him in the custody of his lord’s house, saying, “Why do you look so sad today?” 8 And they said to him, “We each have had a dream, and there is no interpreter of it.” Gen 40:5-8*

Joseph is then told each dream and God gave him the exact meaning. The chief butlers dream led to a favorable outcome and he was pleased. Joseph pleaded with him to remember him when he was restored and revealed he was imprisoned for no fault of his own.

*But remember me when it is well with you, and please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15 For indeed I was stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon.” Gen. 40:14-15*

This outcome led to the chief baker also revealing his dream. But the interpretation was startling and the outcome terrible.

*So Joseph answered and said, “This is the interpretation of it: The three baskets are three days. 19 Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head from you and hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you.” Gen. 40:18-19*

Both interpretations were fulfilled exactly as Joseph revealed them, but the Butler forgot Joseph

and again his hopes were dashed.

*Then he restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23 Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but forgot him. Gen. 40:21-23*

## **The Dreams of Pharaoh**

Two years after the dreams of the chief butler chief baker, God sent two dreams to Pharaoh. These dreams followed in quick succession in a single night and left Pharaoh so troubled in his spirit that he immediately called together all the magicians and wise men in Egypt.

The same word for “*magician*” occurs here, as in the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses and in the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. We can only draw from the Scriptures to gain some understanding. When they confronted Aaron and Moses the *magicians* were called were called “*the wise men and the sorcerers.*”

*But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. 12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the Lord had said. Ex. 7:11-13*

In Daniel, “*the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams.*” (Dan. 2:2-3) Later, Daniel called these same men “*the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers*” (Dan. 2:27-28). In summing this up the to Nebuchadnezzar's son Belshazzar it was said:

*King Nebuchadnezzar your father — your father the king — made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers. 12 Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, whom the king named Beltshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation.” Dan. 5:11-12*

So these were men who in pretense or in fact had “*an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and explaining enigmas.*” But these men could not help Pharaoh.

As he watched Pharaoh, troubled in spirit, the chief butler is reminded of his own feelings after his dream and the relief he felt after meeting Joseph and hearing what it meant. But to bring it up he has to remind Pharaoh of the events that had led to him being thrown in prison. He gives a very accurate account.

*Then the chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: “I remember my faults this day. 10 When Pharaoh was angry with his servants, and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, both me and the chief baker, 11 we each had a dream in one night, he and I. Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his own dream. 12 Now there was a young Hebrew man with us there, a servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his own dream. 13 And it came to pass, just as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him.” Gen. 41:9-13*

This gives Pharaoh the hope he as been seeking for and he immediately calls for Joseph to be brought. But even though the command was urgent, Joseph takes the time to shave and change his clothing. Joseph's confidence must have come from his own dreams and the fact that God had blessed him already with the interpretation of the dreams of the butler and baker or that God had already appeared to him and told him this would happen.

*Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him quickly out of the dungeon; and he shaved, changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. 15 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have had a dream, and there is no one who can interpret it. But I have heard it said of you that you can understand a dream, to interpret it.” 16 So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, “It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace.” Gen. 41:14-16*

Pharaoh again recounts the dreams but this time with his own comments. He revealed to Joseph

that seven fat cows came up out of the river followed by seven lean cows. The lean cows devoured the fat ones, but showed no benefit at all from eating them. The second dream had one “corn” stalk with seven ears on it. History reveals that the term corn as we use it for maize was not grown in the times and places of the Bible History. This is a general word for grain of any kind.

Corn ... There are several words thus translated in the English version of the Scriptures, in which it is used in the proper sense of grain of any kind, and never in the American application of maize or “Indian corn” ... which it is generally thought was anciently unknown. In 1817, Parmentier ... founding on the silence of Varro, Columella, Pliny, and the other agricultural and botanical writers of classical antiquity, concluded that maize was unknown till the discovery of America; (McClintock and Strong Encyclopedia)

It could have been wheat, barley, etc, but the first stalk had full and healthy grain while the second was withered, thin and blighted, but the latter ate the former good heads.

## **Joseph Interprets the Dreams**

Unlike Daniel, Joseph knows immediately the interpretation of these dreams. There are two different dreams with the same meaning.

*Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, “The dreams of Pharaoh are one; God has shown Pharaoh what He is about to do: 26 The seven good cows are seven years, and the seven good heads are seven years; the dreams are one. 27 And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them are seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are seven years of famine. Gen. 41:25-27*

Seven years of blessed abundance are about to come upon Egypt. But after those seven years of abundance there will be seven years of terrible famine. The seven years of famine will be so severe that all the benefits of the seven years of plenty will be lost.

*Indeed seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30 but after them seven years of famine will arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine will deplete the land. 31 So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it will be very severe. 32 And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Gen. 41:29-32*

Again whether Joseph’s next words were prompted by the dreams he had earlier, his own inner wisdom developed over the years or God’s specific revelation is not revealed. But Joseph gives Pharaoh excellent advice and Pharaoh determines that Joseph is the best man for the job.

*“Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, to collect one-fifth of the produce of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. 35 And let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the authority of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. Gen. 41:33-36*

*So the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, “Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?” 39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you.” 41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “See, I have set you over all the land of Egypt.” Gen 41:37-41*

## **Joseph’s Earlier Dream’s about himself are Fulfilled**

In order for Joseph to be in the position to have his brothers and father bow down to him as his earlier dreams had indicated, he must first be placed in a position of authority that would force them to do so. That is exactly what happened next. God’s providence, so easy for Him, often fills us with awe and reverence. Pharaoh places Joseph into the highest position in Egypt, demanding that all who come before him must bow the knee. Only Pharaoh is exempt.

*Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, “Bow the knee!” So he set him over all the land of Egypt. 44 Pharaoh also said to Joseph, “I am Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift*

*his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt.” 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah.  
Gen. 41:42-45*

Joseph was seventeen when he had these two dreams and not long after was sold into slavery by his brothers because of their envy and jealousy. Now he was thirty. As those thirteen years passed, Joseph must have wondered why things were so difficult.

*Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers.*

... 46 Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. Gen 37:2; 41:46

Later, God revealed to us that he was being tested, trained and tried. God never stopped being with Joseph, delivering him again and again from difficult and trying circumstances, but still, he needed that training and guidance to prepare him. The humility and submission he learned during those thirteen years helped him during his times of exaltation to remain humble and faithful to God.

*He sent a man before them — Joseph — who was sold as a slave. 18 They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. 19 Until the time that his word came to pass, The word of the Lord tested him. Ps. 105:17-19*

*“And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with him 10 and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Acts 7:9-10*

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph remained busy and productive, actively preparing for the terrible seven years of famine. If the dreams of Pharaoh were made known as the reason for his position, then those who believed in the power of God would also have been preparing. But many did not. He also had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim during this time of plenty.

The years of gathering not only allowed Egypt to survive, but also became the means for those in foreign lands to have food. This obviously enriched Egypt and made Pharaoh even more favorably inclined toward Joseph. But the true reason for all of these things now comes to the surface as the famine’s impact on Jacob(now Israel) forces him to send his sons to Egypt and into the presence of Joseph.

*When Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, “Why do you look at one another?” 2 And he said, “Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may live and not die.” 3 So Joseph’s ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. Gen. 42:1-4*

Joseph is now 37 years old and the brothers do not recognize him. But just as the dreams had indicated, they all bow down before him and Joseph remembers the dreams.

*Now Joseph was governor over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph’s brothers came and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as a stranger to them and spoke roughly to them. Then he said to them, “Where do you come from?” And they said, “From the land of Canaan to buy food.” 8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. 9 Then Joseph remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them Gen 42:6-9*

## **Joseph Tests His Brothers the First Time**

The interactions between Joseph and his brothers creates a difficulty for the reader. Is he acting under God’s guidance? Are the things he did in their best interests or are they vindictive acts seeking to punish and inflict pain? Was he manipulating them to see what he could learn about their character? There are no easy answers. His later forgiveness of his brothers may have begun here, or may have been brought about by have many years to think about and consider it all.

At any rate, his first interaction is not of mercy and forgiveness, but a serious accusation that brought great fear and consternation into the hearts of these ten men who twenty years earlier had committed the despicable acts of attempted murder, kidnaping and selling into slavery.

Joseph accused them of being spies and then questioned them about their family and learned his father was still alive. He then put them into prison for three days to show them how serious he

considered the offense they had committed. During these days, Joseph formed his plans. He allows 9 to return home, but keeps Simeon as surety that they will return with their younger brother and thus prove their “innocence.” The entire situation strikes them as being odd enough to not have happened by chance and their only conclusion is that it was divine retribution for their sins.

*Then they said to one another, “We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us.” 22 And Reuben answered them, saying, “Did I not speak to you, saying, ‘Do not sin against the boy’; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now required of us.” 23 But they did not know that Joseph understood them, for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24 And he turned himself away from them and wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes. Gen. 42:21-24*

Whether his motive in returning their money was one of kindness or “coals of fire” is difficult to determine, but as he did not use it later against them reveals that did not intend to harm them with it.

The brothers find it very difficult to persuade Jacob to allow Benjamin to return with them. His distrust may reveal his own suspicions about what happened to Joseph, but he is not going to entrust the life of Benjamin to them. Reuben’s offer to allow him to kill two his own children (Jacob’s grandchildren) did not do much to strengthen Jacob’s faith in them. Only the importunity of the food running out and the brothers staunch refusal to return without Benjamin finally force Jacob to relent.

*But Judah spoke to him, saying, “The man solemnly warned us, saying, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’ 4 If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send him, we will not go down; for the man said to us, ‘You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.’” Gen 43:3-5*

This time it is Judah, the one responsible for Joseph being sold to slavery, who offered to take full responsibility for Benjamin.

*Then Judah said to Israel his father, “Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may live and not die, both we and you and also our little ones. 9 I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. Gen 43:8-10*

## **Joseph Tests His Brothers the Second Time**

This time Joseph brings his brothers to his home which fills them with great fear. The “coals of fire” create great consternation as they now believe he will accuse them of stealing the money, leading them to confess to the steward before they are accused, but he passes over it then brings out Simeon.

When Joseph arrives, they give him the present sent by Jacob and marvel that he has seated them in the order of their birth and given Benjamin 5 times more food than the rest.

*And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. 34 Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin’s serving was five times as much as any of theirs. Gen. 43:33-34*

Once again we are confronted with the reasons for Joseph’s behavior. He sets up the brothers for great consternation, fear and grief. He again puts the money in each man’s sack, but also puts his own special cup into the sack of Benjamin. Some have proposed that Joseph is testing if their love for Benjamin and their father would lead to a different outcome than it had with him.

*And he commanded the steward of his house, 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. 2 Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money. Gen 44:1-2*

Believing themselves to be falsely accused, they offer death for the guilty person and imprisonment for the rest of them. Beginning with the eldest, each man finds his money in the mouth of their sack. This must have led to some misgivings, and when they come to Benjamin, the cup is found. With their own mouths they have pronounced a terrible sentence upon themselves and the anguish was

great.

*With whomever of your servants it is found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves." 10 And he said, "Now also let it be according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." 11 Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. 12 So he searched. He began with the oldest and left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city. Gen. 44:9-13*

They all offer to share in the punishment, but Joseph states that fairness demanded that only Benjamin committed the crime so the rest can go free.

### **Judah Revealed his Growth and Remorse**

Judah takes Joseph aside and privately discusses the family circumstances. He candidly admits that Jacob loved Benjamin with a greater love than his brethren, but all traces of jealousy and envy are gone and only sympathy for the father remains.

*'We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, who is young; his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother's children, and his father loves him.' 21 Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22 And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' ..... 27 Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, "Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29 But if you take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.' 30 "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, 31 it will happen, when he sees that the lad is not with us, that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. ... 33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34 For how shall I go up to my father if the lad is not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would come upon my father?" Gen 44:20-23; 27-32; 33-34*

Judah's heart is now revealed to Joseph. What he believed he could not make right with Joseph (since he believed he was dead), he was now willing to make up for with Benjamin.

This clear evidence of growth and remorse brought Joseph to tears. He then revealed himself to them and the ten brothers were speechless, while Benjamin's heart must have been filled with joy and comfort. Joseph then revealed his own assessment of the present set of circumstances. He rightly sees God's providence in it all.

*But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the famine has been in the land, and there are still five years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God sent me before you to preserve a posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now it was not you who sent me here, but God; and He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt. Gen 45:5-8*

It is difficult to imagine the feelings in the hearts of the brothers. First, Joseph's dreams that had filled them with such jealousy had come true to their own salvation. Second, the fact that Joseph was alive and that their father would hear of their deeds must have filled them with dread. Third, the one they had betrayed was now the most powerful man in Egypt and they were completely under his power. Fourth, the manner in which they had been treated with their money in their sacks, Simeon imprisoned, the cup placed in Benjamin's sack were all revealed to have been the work of Joseph and they had to be wondering why.

But Joseph does not leave them time to ponder these things (though it must have been a long and anxious ride home). He revealed to them that the famine would continue for another five years, but that he would take care of them all. He then asked them to bring a message to his father Jacob.

*"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 tarry. 10 You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to*



*poverty; for there are still five years of famine.” Gen 45:9-11*

When Pharaoh heard that he now had an opportunity to repay Joseph for all the good he had done for Egypt, he is pleased and wants to do them a great favor.

*And Pharaoh said to Joseph, “Say to your brothers, ‘Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat the fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded — do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt is yours.” Gen 45:17-20*

Joseph’s final admonition to his brothers are words of comfort.

*So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, “See that you do not become troubled along the way.” Gen 45:24*

As soon as the brothers arrive home, they reveal the good news to Jacob(it doesn’t appear that they confessed their part in the debacle). Jacob is filled with astonishment, and only after he sees all the gifts and provisions does he fully believe and makes the decision to go and see Joseph.

## **Israel goes to Egypt**

The next phase of God’s eternal purpose now begins just as God had revealed to Abraham.

*Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” Gen 15:13-16*

God has several purposes. First, since the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete, Israel cannot receive its inheritance until that is fulfilled. Second, God want to give Egypt the opportunity to be tested, and after they fail the test God will use Israel’s Exodus from Egypt as an opportunity to judge them.

God appeared to Jacob to reveal that He wanted Israel to now go into Egypt. It may be that Jacob had some misgivings about going and God wanted to comfort him with the promise that all would be well.

*Then God spoke to Israel in the visions of the night, and said, “Jacob, Jacob!” And he said, “Here I am.” 3 So He said, “I am God, the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will make of you a great nation there. 4 I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will put his hand on your eyes.” Gen 46:2-4*

After listing their genealogy, God summed up the number of people who came into Egypt as Israel.

*All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives, were sixty-six persons in all. 27 And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy. Gen 46:26-27*

Joseph’s meeting with his father is only briefly recounted, while the issues needing resolved between the brother had several chapters. Thus God was much more concerned that we understand the relationship between the sinful brothers and their innocent victim than with the Father who is reunited with the son.

*So Joseph made ready his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while. 30 And Israel said to Joseph, “Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive.” Gen. 46:29-30*

## **Joseph Settles his Family in Goshen**

Joseph is very careful about the manner in which he settles his family. There are some issues between Jacob’s occupation and the moral sensibilities of the Egyptians and Joseph is both cautious and very open and honest with his family and Pharaoh. He uses this to their advantage by getting them settled in some of the best land in Egypt.

*So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, 'What is your occupation?' 34 that you shall say, 'Your servants' occupation has been with livestock from our youth even till now, both we and also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Gen 46:33-34*

After the family is taken care of, the narrative of Joseph's handling of the famine is given. He is able to abundantly bless Pharaoh as a result of the famine and thus make himself very important to him. First, "And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan." Then the next year, "Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you bread for your livestock, if the money is gone," "Thus he fed them with bread in exchange for all their livestock that year. ... "Then Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's." This was done through taxation for "it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh." (Gen. 47:14, 16-17, 20, 23-24).

## **The Last Days of Jacob**

After living in Egypt for seventeen years, Jacob's feels his body weakening and decided to ask Joseph to swear to him that he would take him back to Canaan and bury him there.

*And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29 When the time drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please put your hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me. Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place." Gen 47:28-30*

Later when Joseph hears that Jacob is sick he brings his two sons to be blessed by him. What must Jacob have felt as he remember his own very similar situation so many years earlier with Esau and his father Isaac. Now Manasseh and Ephraim are brought before him and it has been revealed to him that the younger would become greater than the firstborn. When he blesses them accordingly, Joseph wants to reverse it, but Jacob overrules him.

After this event, Jacob called all his sons together and said "Gather together, that I may tell you what shall befall you in the last days: Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob, And listen to Israel your father." (Gen 49:1-2) After revealing what God had shown him, he told all his sons that he wanted to be buried in the same cave where others of his family had been placed.

*Then he charged them and said to them: "I am to be gathered to my people; bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. 31 There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah Gen. 49:29-31*

The final chapter of Genesis records the trip to Canaan and Jacob's burial. After his burial, Joseph's brothers are fearful that the day of reckoning has arrived and they plead with him for mercy. For the first time it is revealed that Jacob did know what they had done and wanted Joseph to forgive them.

*When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." 16 So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.'" Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father." Gen 50:15-17*

Joseph again revealed to them that it was God who brought this about and in spite of their evil intent, it was now between them and God.

*Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God? 20 But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive. 21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them. Gen 50:19-21*

The final words of Genesis record Joseph's death at the age of 110, 80 years after he had become

the ruler over all Egypt. How small those 13 years of sorrow must have seemed to him then when compared to all the good that they had brought to himself and to his brethren. Like his father, Joseph also asked to be carried back to be buried in the land of Canaan. But in his faith in God's promises he chose to wait until God carried the entire nation back to Canaan.

*"I am dying; but God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25 Then Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here." Gen. 50:24-26*

*By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones. Heb 11:22*

## Moses - 1 - Birth and Early Education

When God spoke to Abraham He revealed that his descendants would spend 400 years in Egypt. Later, He recorded the actual time as 430 years. Since Moses was 80 at the Exodus, the time of Israel in Egypt as the book of Exodus begins would have been about 350 years.

*Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. Gen 15:13-14*

*Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years — on that very same day — it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. Ex 12:40-42*

*And Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. Ex 7:7*

While the book opened with the fact that seventy people came down into Egypt, it was clear that during those years, several things had changed.

- 1 The children of Israel had multiplied.
- 2 A new dynasty arose with no concern or knowledge of Joseph and the great deeds he had done.
- 3 Because of the explosive growth, fear and suspicion grew that Israel was/could become a threat.

*But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them. 8 Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we; 10 come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and so go up out of the land." Ex 1:7-11*

Due to these factors Israel's position in Egypt rapidly deteriorated.

1. Lost favor in the sight of the Egyptians. 1:8-10
2. Became slaves ruled over by taskmasters. 1:11-12
3. Began to force them to serve with rigor and made their lives bitter with hard bondage. 1:13-14
4. Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill the male but save the female babies. 1:15-20
5. Pharaoh commanded all his people to throw all the Hebrew boys in the river. 1:22

*"But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt 18 till another king arose who did not know Joseph. 19 This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. Acts 7:17-19*

### The Birth of Moses

The second chapter of Exodus opens with the birth of Moses. It is not until later that God revealed Moses had a brother who was three years older than Moses. Miriam's age is not revealed, but it is probable she is the eldest, since she speaks with Pharaoh's daughter in such an intelligent manner. Evidently, Aaron passed through the time of the danger of being thrown into the river without incident, but Moses was threatened. She hid him for three months, but it became apparent that he could no longer be hidden. So they took the necessary steps to hide him in the reeds by the river. It is difficult to know what was in the minds of his parents. Did they hope for God's providence? It appears from Hebrews that they did expect something from the Lord. Miriam stood and watched to see what would happen.

*So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. 4 And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Ex 2:2-4*

*By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command. Heb 11:23*

Stephen also inferred the providence of God when he says Moses was well pleasing to God even at that time.

*At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. 21 But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. Acts 7:20-22*

Moses is left in the small basket floating in the reeds when the daughter of Pharaoh arrives to bathe in the river. As they walked the path to the place in the river where it was open enough to bathe she finds the basket with the crying infant inside. She inferred he was a Hebrew baby since he was hidden all alone in the river.

*Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. 6 And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." Ex 2:5-6*

In one of the most amazing acts of providence anywhere in the Scriptures, on the same day, one moment the parents must give up the child because they can't hid him anymore and a few hours later, Moses is back in the home and his mother is being paid by Pharaoh's daughter to raise him. The events that led to this are simple enough. When Miriam sees the compassion of Pharaoh's daughter and realizes she wants the child, but can't raise him yet, she offers to find a Hebrew woman to nurse Moses. The woman she chose was Moses own mother.

*Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?" 8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. Ex 2:7-10*

Moses therefore remains with his mother all the time necessary to nurse him. At some point after he was weaned, he was brought to Pharaoh's daughter.

*And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water." Ex 2:10*

## **Moses Early Education**

Stephen makes clear that Moses was forty years old in the next verse.

*Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. Ex 2:11-13*

*"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. Acts 7:23-25*

Although these forty years are passed over with little information in Exodus, there are some very important inferences to be made when looking at the further information the Holy Spirit revealed in the New Testament. First, Stephen revealed that Moses had been "educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and was "mighty in word and deed."(Acts 7:22-23).

*But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Acts 7:21-22*

Clearly, Moses received the best education money and power could but in that age. God revealed that he at that time in his life he was mighty in his words and in his deeds. Although these were important achievements and roughly equivalent to our own college degree, this education played no part in the most important decision of his life. It was not the "wisdom of the Egyptians" that

brought about his decision.

*By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward. Heb 11:24-26*

Clearly, there were two competing visions. The vista from Egypt's wisdom revealed the "*treasures of Egypt*" and the ease and prosperity of being in the household of Pharaoh. It's only enticement: "*the pleasures of sin for a season.*" This powerful vista has tempted and destroyed multitudes. It is one of the three temptations Satan used on Jesus(Lk 4:5-6) for it blends the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life into one terrible vision.

Only the "eyes of faith" could have revealed the panoramic vista seen by those who "*walk by faith and not by sight.*" (2Cor 5:7). It was from this perspective Moses could see the "*recompense of reward*" and the "*greater riches*" gained through "*the reproach of Christ.*" It is clear that for forty years Moses saw both. But the day finally came when he had to "*hate the one and love the other*" or "*hold to one, and despise the other.*" (Mt 6:24). When that day came it was his faith and not Egypt's wisdom that won the day.

What was the source of this faith? Since all faith comes "*by hearing the word of God*" (Rom 10:17) clearly at the same time Moses was learning the wisdom of Egypt, he had also learned God's wisdom. Perhaps his mother had taught him as she nursed him(*Ex 2:7-10*) passing on his heritage as Abraham's seed. If so then he was like Timothy who "*from a babe*" had "*known the sacred writings which are able to make wise unto salvation.*" (2 Tim 3:15) Maybe he had continued contact with his sister Miriam, his brother Aaron, and his family who then created this foundation that changed his destiny. It was by this faith that he became one of those precious souls listed in the "*great cloud of witnesses*" in Hebrews 11.

## Moses - 2 - Continuing Education

When Moses chose ill treatment with the people of God he expected quick results for Israel's deliverance from Egypt. He supposed that they were ready to be delivered and that it would only take something like this to move them to rise up. God would then help them since they had that promise.

*And seeing one (of them) suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, smiting the Egyptian: 25 and **he supposed that his brethren understood that God by his hand was giving them deliverance; but they understood not.** Acts 7:24-25*

When Israel rejected Moses offer, and God remained silent, Moses was forced to flee

*And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' 27 **But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?' 28 Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Acts 7:26-29***

*Now it came to pass in those days, when **Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens.** And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" 14 Then he said, "**Who made you a prince and a judge over us?** Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian? So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" 15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; "Ex. 2:11-15*

*"This **Moses whom they rejected**, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' **is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer** by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. Acts 7:35-36*

Trying to put all the pieces together is difficult since much is left unrevealed, but we have enough information to make some observations. When the people failed to understand he wanted to deliver them, Moses was left in a dangerous position. Pharaoh became aware of what he had done and intended to slay him. So Moses was forced to flee. But though the account in Exodus reveals he felt initial fear when his role in the death of the Egyptian was made known he soon mastered it with his faith

*So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" 15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and **dwelt in the land of Midian**; and he sat down by a well. Ex. 2:14-15*

*"By **faith** he forsook Egypt, **not fearing** the wrath of the king." Heb. 11:27*

This creates an interesting question to consider. Did he flee by faith because God told him to go or as his parents long ago did he simply trust in the providence of God? In any case, Moses left Egypt either knowing the people had rejected God's purpose to use him, or he left knowing Israel had rejected his own offer to deliver them. Stephen seems to lean a little toward the former, but not enough to be certain.

For the next forty years Moses lived in obscurity in Midian keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Nothing is said about learning, great deeds or renown. He simply lived.

*Then **Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses.** 22 And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land." Ex. 2:21-22*

*Now **Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian.** And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Ex. 3:1-2*

*And **Moses was eighty years old** and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. Ex. 7:7*

What did Moses learn during these forty years? What did this "continuing education" do for his character? Whatever initial zeal and reasoning Moses had for putting himself forward as God's

deliverer were lost during these forty years. It appears that he also lost whatever worldly pride and confidence in his being *“mighty in word and deed.”*

At the burning bush God revealed to Moses that the desires and dreams he had held at forty were now within his grasp and would soon become a reality. Yet though Moses had been convinced of his ability when he was forty, now at eighty he no longer felt competent. His responses to the angel of Jehovah reveal a very different self-image than the one he possessed when he first chose to share ill treatment with the people of God. Moses had clearly lost all confidence in the abilities he had gleaned while becoming *“learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.”*

When God appeared in the burning bush, Moses’ aspirations to be God’s deliverer were forgotten. Though God told Moses he was going to deliver Israel out of Egypt and intended to use Moses to *“bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”* (Ex. 3:10) Moses response revealed both caution and humility. He now understood his own insignificance in this life. When God revealed his plan Moses responded:

*Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? Ex. 3:11*

As an vessel now emptied of worldly pride and confidence, he was fully prepared to be filled with the wisdom that God gives by faith. At this time even God’s promise to be with him and bring Israel out with His mighty power which should have comforted Moses, was not enough. Whether it was discouragement or too much humility, both would soon be removed, but at this time he did not feel up to this responsibility.

*Then Moses answered and said, “But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, ‘The Lord has not appeared to you.’” Ex. 4:1*

With great longsuffering and gracious compassion, God promised to allow him to do signs and wonders to prove his veracity. Moses response again revealed a lack of confidence in his own ability. While Stephen said he was mighty in word and deed, Moses had lost that during his forty year of continuing education.

*“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” Ex. 4:10*

God then reminded Moses to whom he was talking. God had made Moses mouth and clearly knew his abilities better than Moses did. Obviously God would not offer him an opportunity he was unable to perform. God then promised Moses that he would *“teach him what he should speak.”* (4:11-12) This appears to be the promise of inspiration, which later came to Moses aid again and again.

This last exchange is difficult to assess because we can’t hear the tone of voice. It could have been open rebellion or just such deep humility and lack of ambitious pride that he still felt unworthy.

*But he said, “O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send.” Ex. 4:13*

God’s anger revealed that whatever it was in Moses heart at this point was either a lack of faith or an inability to put God’s will above his own. God already knew what we will learn later. Aaron was not strong enough to stand up against the wickedness of the people. The rest of the people would die in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb were still young and unprepared. Moses was the only man.

*So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and He said: “Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. Ex. 4:14-16*

Clearly, in his own eyes, Moses was no longer *“mighty in word and deed.”* He was no longer eager to put himself forward. His rejection by Israel and his forty years as a shepherd had taught him humility. A little over a year after the Exodus(Num 9:1) God revealed:

*“Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth. Num. 12:3*



What a wonderful tribute to Moses. By 80 years old he was the most humble man on the face of the earth. But Moses still had more to learn. On his way to Egypt, God was forced to teach him more about submission and obedience.

*And it came to pass **on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him.** 25 Then **Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet,** and said, **"Surely you are a husband of blood to me!"** 26 **So He let him go.** Then she said, **"You are a husband of blood!"** — because of the circumcision. Ex. 4:24-26*

Moses had not circumcised his son and obviously Zipporah was deeply opposed to it. Up to this point he had taken her feelings and placed them above God. After God revealed the serious nature of this offense she obeyed the command, and whatever trap or danger God had placed Moses in was removed. Since Zipporah is back with her father when Moses returned to Sinai, it is possible that at this time she left Moses and returned.

*Then Jethro, **Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,** 3 with her two sons, of whom the name of one was Gershom (for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land") 4 and the name of the other was Eliezer (for he said, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); 5 and **Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at the mountain of God.** Ex. 18:2-6*

## **Moses Began his work as Deliverer**

When Moses arrived in Egypt, his initial encounter with Israel was very encouraging. They believed the signs God had given and bowed in worship to God.

*Then **Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders** of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then **he did the signs in the sight of the people.** 31 **So the people believed;** and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then **they bowed their heads and worshiped.** Ex. 4:29-31*

The first encounter with Pharaoh did not go well at all. Not only did Pharaoh not comply with God's command, but he turned on Israel in fury and made their lives much more difficult.

*Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" 2 And Pharaoh said, **"Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go."** Ex. 5:1-2*

*So **the same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters** of the people and their officers, saying, 7 "You shall **no longer give the people straw to make brick** as before. **Let them go and gather straw** for themselves. 8 And **you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before.** You shall **not reduce it.** For **they are idle;** therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9 **Let more work be laid on the men,** that they may labor in it, and **let them not regard false words.**" Ex. 5:6-9*

*But he said, **"You are idle! Idle!** Therefore you say, **'Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord.'** 18 Therefore go now and work; for **no straw shall be given you,** yet **you shall deliver the quota of bricks.**" 19 And the officers of the children of Israel saw that they were in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce any bricks from your daily quota." 20 Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, **they met Moses and Aaron** who stood there to meet them. 21 And they said to them, **"Let the Lord look on you and judge,** because **you have made us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh** and in the sight of his servants, to **put a sword in their hand to kill us.**" Ex. 5:17-21*

## **God's Purpose was more than just Delivering Israel from Egypt**

Once again, if Moses thought he would get quick results, his hopes were dashed. He had to learn that God's ways are not man's ways and God's purposes can take more than one goal. In this case, not only did God want to deliver Israel, but he also wanted to make His power known and punish Egypt for their idolatry and wickedness against Israel.

So **Moses returned to the Lord** and said, **“Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all.”** 1 Then the Lord said to Moses, **“Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.”** Ex. 5:22-6:1

And I **have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel** whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and **I have remembered My covenant.** 6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: **‘I am the Lord; I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments.** 7 I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the Lord your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Ex. 6:5-8

It was for this purpose that God had chosen this man to be Pharaoh. He knew this Pharaoh would resist and fight to the end. This would make it much more difficult for Moses and for Israel, in the short term, but the long term goals were all met. God revealed to Pharaoh that He could have simply destroyed them all in a pestilence, but God had different plans.

Now **if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence,** then you would have **been cut off from the earth.** 16 But indeed **for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.** 17 As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. Ex. 9:15-18

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Moses learned patience and endurance.</li><li>2. Israel had the opportunity to develop their faith and also gain endurance.</li><li>3. Pharaoh learned by bitter experience the utter folly of resisting or fighting against God.</li><li>4. Egypt learned their gods were truly powerless against the one true and living God.</li><li>5. God’s power was shown and His name declared in all the earth.</li></ol> |
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When Pharaoh removed the straw and forced Israel to gather it themselves, it was a bitter blow. Far from success the first encounter seemed to end in worse than utter failure because things we made so much worse for them. Moses was deeply distressed, feeling that his words at the burning bush were being fulfilled. Yet God encouraged Moses that in the end Pharaoh would submit. God promised to deliver Israel from Egypt and lead them to the promised land. When Moses took these promises to Israel, they were too crushed by Pharaoh’s tyranny to even listen.

So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but **they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.** Ex. 6:9

As God prepared Moses to return a second time to Pharaoh, Moses again expressed his misgivings about his abilities.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 11 **“Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land.”** 12 And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, **“The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?”** Ex. 6:10-12

God again patiently revealed to Moses how he would be successful(7:1-7). In the days that followed Moses gained the confidence that we see throughout his final 40 years as leader of Israel. When God defended Moses against the charges of Miriam and Aaron, his own assessment was clear:

Then He said, **“Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses: He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?”** Num. 12:6-8

Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, **as Moses also was faithful in all His house. . . . 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant,** for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, Heb. 3:1-2, 5

Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth. Num. 12:3

What a wonderful opportunity for each of us. Moses was forty when he cast off Egypt. His first attempts at service to God met with failure and for 40 years it appeared he would do no more for the Lord than just live a good life. Then at eighty God called him to serve. Humility and faith appear to be the wonderful virtues that led God to choose Him. When we “trust in the Lord with all our heart and lean not on our own understanding,” and we empty ourselves of our own will and seek to do only the will of God, God can fill us with His wisdom and His will. We should all pray that we might be more like Moses.

## Moses - 3 - God's Deliverer

The next phase of Moses' life is recorded in Exodus 4-15. His first forty years were spent as an Egyptian who was a son of Pharaoh's daughter and became mighty in word and deed. That portion ended when he decided to help Israel in their deliverance from Egypt. The next period is also a forty-year period spent as a shepherd and husband. Not much is told of this period of his life, but it came to an end at the burning bush when God called him to be His deliverer of Israel.

Now Moses is in Egypt and begins the task given to him by God.

### Moses Begins his work

When Moses arrived in Egypt, his initial encounter with Israel was very encouraging. They believed the signs God had given and bowed in worship to God.

*Then **Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders** of the children of Israel. 30 And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken to Moses. Then **he did the signs in the sight of the people**. 31 So **the people believed**; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then **they bowed their heads and worshiped**. Ex. 4:29-31*

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1. Moses learned patience and endurance.
2. Israel had the opportunity to develop their faith and also gain endurance.
3. Pharaoh learned by bitter experience the utter folly of resisting or fighting against God.
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5. God's power was shown and His name declared in all the earth.

## **Paul Explained God's Purpose**

In the midst of an explanation of God's eternal purpose in bringing salvation to man and the dismal failure of Israel itself to avail itself of the amazing opportunity God had given to them, Paul turned to this moment in time. Just as in the time of Christ, so here, there were two individuals for God to work with. There were those who by their conduct and choice had made themselves into vessels of wrath. They had chosen to rebel against God and had hardened their hearts to the degree where there was nothing further God could do with them. They were beyond help. This was so of Moses for not even the Ten plagues could help these vessels of wrath. In the same way it was true in the time of Jesus for not even the Son of God Himself, with His miracles, fulfillment of prophesy, and powerful teaching could help those in Israel who had hardened their hearts. The both illustrate each other so it makes it easier to see when they are compared.

*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." 16 So then ***it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.*** 17 For ***the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."*** 18 ***Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.*** 19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 ***What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,*** 23 and ***that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy,*** which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Rom 9:14-24*

The confrontation with Pharaoh was set up by God for a very specific purpose. Egypt was a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction. The use of Pharaoh was choosing a man who hated God's people and thus God himself. When Moses simple request so infuriated Pharaoh that he took away their straw, it became obvious that this confrontation was not going to be easily resolved.

When Pharaoh removed the straw and forced Israel to gather it themselves, it was a bitter blow. Far from success the first encounter seemed to end in worse than utter failure because things we made so much worse for them. Moses was deeply distressed, feeling that his words at the burning bush were being fulfilled. Yet God encouraged Moses that in the end Pharaoh would submit. God promised to deliver Israel from Egypt and lead them to the promised land. When Moses took these promises to Israel, they were too crushed by Pharaoh's tyranny to even listen.

So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but **they did not heed Moses, because of anguish of spirit and cruel bondage.** Ex. 6:9

## **An Epic Battle between God and the Forces of Darkness**

Moses was caught between the extremes of a bitter battle between light and darkness and between good and evil. The darkness hates the light and absolutely refused to bend. God is going to force Pharaoh to comply, but he will do it slowly. At the beginning, it appeared that Pharaoh was stronger and would prevail. Then for a short time, it appeared that Pharaoh and God are equally matched. Then when God's power grew stronger, it was a sullen Pharaoh who would admit defeat, then regroup as soon as the threat was removed and continue to rebel.

This was to end just as the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah, but the plans and goals were different so the method was different. But Egypt's wickedness was great.

*According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances. 4 You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord your God. Lev 18:3-5*

*(for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who were before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that were before you. Lev 18:27-29*

As God prepared Moses to return a second time to Pharaoh, Moses again expressed his misgivings about his abilities. He doesn't understand, as many after him, why this can't be quick and decisive. He takes it very personally as though if he were better it would be decided more quickly, but looking over his shoulders, we see more clearly that this had nothing to do with Moses abilities.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land." 12 And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, "**The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?**" Ex. 6:10-12*

God again patiently revealed to Moses how he would be successful(7:1-7). In the days that followed Moses gained the confidence that we see throughout his final 40 years as leader of Israel. When God defended Moses against the charges of Miriam and Aaron, his own assessment was clear:

*Then He said, "Hear now My words: **If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. 8 I speak with him face to face, Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?**" Num. 12:6-8*

*Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, **as Moses also was faithful in all His house. . . . 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant,** for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, Heb. 3:1-2, 5*

Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth. Num. 12:3

## **The Battle Fought with the Ten Plagues**

1. Water into Blood	Ex 7:14-25
2. Frogs	Ex 8:1-15
3. Lice	Ex 8:16-19
4. Flies	Ex 8:20-32
5. Pestilence against livestock	Ex 9:1-7

6. Boils	Ex 9:8-12
7. Hail	Ex 9:13-35
8. Locusts	Ex 10:1-20
9. Darkness	Ex 10:21-29
10. Death of Firstborn	Ex 11:1-9; 12:1-29

It seems obvious with all that we have already seen that God started off with acts of power that could be duplicated. The magicians were able to turn staffs into serpents(Ex 4:11-13), and though Aaron's rod showed its greater power by eating theirs, Pharaoh was hardened. He was further hardened after the magicians were able to duplicate the water into blood(4:22) and the frogs(4:7). By the time they could not duplicate the lice, Pharaoh was fixed and would not change. The remaining plagues were used to destroy Egypt slowly.

Even after the hail, Pharaoh's servants saw that Egypt was already diminished and ruined.

*Then Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long shall this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"* Ex 10:7

It must have been a bitter experience for Egypt.

21 The **fish that were in the river died**, the river stank, and the **Egyptians could not drink the water of the river**. So **there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt**.... 24 So all the **Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink**, because they could not drink the water of the river. 25 And seven days passed after the Lord had struck the river. Ex 7:21, 24-25

3 So the river shall **bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls**.... 14 They **gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank**. Ex 8:3-4, 14-15

For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and **it became lice on man and beast**. All the dust of the land became **lice throughout all the land of Egypt**. Ex 8:17

**Thick swarms of flies** came into the house of Pharaoh, into his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. **The land was corrupted because of the swarms of flies**. Ex 8:24

So the Lord did this thing on the next day, and **all the livestock of Egypt died**; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died Ex 9:6

And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will **cause boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt**." 10 Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered them toward heaven. And they caused boils that break out in sores on man and beast. 11 And **the magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils**, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. Ex 9:9-12

Therefore send now and gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for **the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die**." 20 **He who feared the word of the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh** made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. 21 But **he who did not regard the word of the Lord left his servants and his livestock in the field**. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 **And the hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that was in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field**. Ex 9:19-21, 24-26

Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow **I will bring locusts into your territory**. 5 And they shall **cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth**; and they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. 6 They shall fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, 15 For they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt. Ex 10:4-6, 15

Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and **there was thick darkness in all the land of Egypt** three days. 23 They **did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days**. But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings. Ex 10:22-23

And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck **all the firstborn in the land of Egypt**, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. 30 So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for **there was not a house where there was not one dead**. Ex 12:29-30

## **Purpose of the Ten Plagues**

### **1 To Deliver Israel from Bondage**

*And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But Pharaoh will not heed you, so that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My armies and My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I stretch out My hand on Egypt and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Ex 7:3-5*

### **2. To Punish Egypt for Enslaving Israel**

*Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Gen. 15:13-15*

### **3. To Bring Judgment Ggaint the gods of Egypt**

*For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. Ex 12:12-13*

### **4. To Magnify God's Name in all the Earth.**

*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may serve Me, 14 for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, that you may know that there is none like Me in all the earth. 15 Now if I had stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But indeed for this purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth. 17 As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. Ex 9:13-18*

*and said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. Josh 2:9-12*

*Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 1 Sam 4:8-9*

The final plague marked the end of Israel's sojourn in Israel.

*Now the sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. 41 And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years — on that very same day — it came to pass that all the armies of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. 42 It is a night of solemn observance to the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This is that night of the Lord, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations. Ex 12:40-42*

It also marked the time when God said He would punish Egypt and bless His people. After the death of all the firstborn such a dread fell on the Egyptians that they were no longer even interested in their possessions.

*And the Egyptians urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We shall all be dead." Ex 12:33*

*Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. 36 And the Lord had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them what they requested. Thus they plundered the Egyptians. Ex 12:35-36*

God knew the heart of Israel and gave them the easy way as he led them in the wilderness.



Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt." 18 So God led the people around by way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt. Ex 13:17-18

So they took their journey from Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21 And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people. Ex 13:20-22

A second purpose for having Israel go the long way around is to give Pharaoh one final chance to punish Israel out of hatred and spite. In this way God hardened the heart of Pharaoh one final time.

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they turn and camp before Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, 'They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' 4 Then I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord." And they did so. Ex 14:1-4

Pharaoh did exactly what God knew he would and still tried to take vengeance on them for what God had done to him.

*Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" 6 So he made ready his chariot and took his people with him. 7 Also, he took six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. 8 And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and the children of Israel went out with boldness. Ex 14:5-9*

Israel began its disrespectful attitude toward God while waiting before the Red Sea with Pharaoh's army surrounding them. Instead of faith and humility they express anger and impatience.

*Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Ex 14:11-12*

God's words to Moses are difficult. Either God had already told him what to do and was simply demanding that He move forward with the plan, or perhaps God wanted to see Moses taking more initiative.

*15 And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. 16 But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea. Ex 14:15-16*

Since there is no respect of persons with God, and He never tempts anyone with evil, this final hardening is like the other times. It is the realization that Israel is escaping and there was still a chance to destroy them by following them into the sea.

*And I indeed will harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18 Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen." Ex 14:17-18*

God then delayed them long enough to allow Israel's escape.

*And the Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. 20 So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness to the one, and it gave light by night to the other, so that the one did not come near the other all that night. Ex 14:19-20*

# Moses - 4 - God's Lawgiver

## Israel Arrives at Sinai

The next phase of Moses life began soon after they passed through the Red Sea as they reached Mt Sinai and camped there.

***In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the Wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from Rephidim, had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain. 3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."*** Ex 19:1-6

At that moment, the children of Israel made the commitment to do all that God asked of them.

*So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the Lord commanded him. 8 Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the Lord. 9 And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." Ex 19:7-9*

## God gave the Ten Commandments

Three days after this commitment, God gave them an experience they should never have forgotten to reveal to them how awesome, powerful and mighty He is.

*Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. Ex 19:16-20*

God then spoke the ten commandments from heaven to put His awe, fear and reverence into their hearts(Ex 20:1-17):

### **And God spoke all these words, saying:**

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. You shall have no other gods before Me.                  | 6. You shall not murder             |
| 2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image           | 7. You shall not commit adultery    |
| 3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain | 8. You shall not steal              |
| 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.               | 9. You shall not bear false witness |
| 5. Honor your father and your mother                        | 10. You shall not covet             |

God wanted all future generations to know how extraordinary this event was. Not only was God speaking these word in a voice like thunder, but there was actual thunder and lightning, A sound of the trumpet, the mountain smoking that led even Moses to say "*I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.*"

*For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.") Heb 12:18-21*

After this event, the people promise even more fervently to obey the Lord and plead with the Moses that he alone should hear these words and bring them to them.

Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. Ex 20:18-21

After these events, Moses himself was called to come into the mountain and remained there for forty days and nights.

Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. 17 The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. 18 So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. Ex 24:16-18

## Plans for the Tabernacle

While on Mount Sinai for these forty days, God gave Moses many laws and ordinances and he also gave the plans for the tabernacle.

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering. From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. 3 And this is the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; 4 blue, purple, and scarlet thread, fine linen, and goats' hair; 5 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 6 oil for the light, and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 7 onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate. 8 And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it. Ex 25:1-9

God then gave the plans and details for each of the things that were to be placed in the tabernacle along with the building of the tabernacle itself.

Ark of the Covenant	25:10-16	Curtains	26:1-14	Alter of Burnt offering	27:1-8
The Mercy Seat	25:17-22	Boards	26:15-30	Dimensions - Court	27:9-16
Table of show bread	25:23-30	Veil	26:31-35	Bronze Laver	30:17-21
Golden Lampstand	25:31-40	Screen	26:36-37		
Altar of Incense	30:1-10				

## God used Inspiration to Build Everything in the Tabernacle

The details given in the Scriptures we possess are far too vague to create exactly what God desired so he did two things.

And see to it that you make them according to **the pattern which was shown you on the mountain...** 30 And you shall raise up the tabernacle according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain. Ex 25:40; 26:30

Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "See, **I have called by name Bezalel** the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 And **I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship,** 4 **to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze,** 5 **in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood,** and to work in **all manner of workmanship.** 6 "And I, indeed I, have appointed with him Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan; and **I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you:** 7 **the tabernacle of meeting, the ark of the Testimony and the mercy seat that is on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle —** 8 **the table and its utensils, the pure gold lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense,** 9 **the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base** Ex 31:1-9

And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, the Lord has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 and **He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom** and

**understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, ... 34 "And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, in him and Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35 He has filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine linen, and of the weaver — those who do every work and those who design artistic works. Ex 35:30-35**

The work was overseen by the Holy Spirit and everything made was exactly as God envisioned it because it had a very specific purpose.

*For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; 5 who serve **the copy and shadow of the heavenly things**, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "**See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.**" 6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. Heb 8:4-6*

*It was necessary therefore that **the copies of the things in the heavens** should be cleansed with these; but **the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.** Heb 9:23*

*But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with **the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.** Heb 9:11-12*

## Moses - 5 - God's Lawgiver- 2

### The Golden Calf(Ex. 32)

The reason Israel cited for the creation of the golden was the complaint that they did not know what had happened to Moses since he had been gone such a long time.

*Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Ex 32:1*

A quick reminder of the time frame makes clear that Moses had been gone less than six weeks, and it has been less than six months since they had left Egypt! The ten plagues, passing through the Red Sea, being fed with manna, hearing and seeing God's arrival on Sinai and even hearing God speak the ten commandments were still fresh on their minds.

- 1 Israel left Egypt on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. Ex. 12:2, 6
- 2 Israel was camping at the base of Mt Sinai in the third month(**6-10 weeks**). Ex. 19:1-2
- 3 Moses went up to speak with God immediately after they camped. Ex. 19:3
- 4 Moses called the Israel's elders and gave the instructions to prepare to meet God Ex. 19:7-8
- 5 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day God came down on Sinai and spoke the 10 commandments. Ex. 19:16 - 20:1
- 6 Moses returned to Sinai and wrote a part of the Law as recorded in Ex. 20:18 - 24:2. This may have been a day or several days since it is not recorded(**1-2 weeks**).
- 7 Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders from Israel then approached Sinai, and were given a vision of God. Ex. 24:9-11
- 8 After seven days, God commanded Moses to come to the Mountain and receive the tablets of stone on which were written the 10 commandments. Moses instructed the 70 elders to wait his return then entered the thick cloud(**1 week**). Ex. 24:12-18
- 9 Moses was on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights(**6 weeks**). Ex. 24:18

If we add up the 6-10 weeks(2) the 1-2 weeks(6) the 1 week(8) and the 6 weeks(9) we get a total of 15-19 weeks or 4-5 months since leaving Egypt.

When we add to that the awe and fear they must have felt with all the events that happened even before their arrival at Sinai.

1. Their amazement and relief of the passing through the Red Sea(Ex. 14:30-31).
2. Seeing God make the bitter water sweet(Ex. 15:23-25).
3. The gift of Quails and manna(Ex. 16).
4. The water from the rock in the wilderness(Ex. 17:5-7).
5. Defeating the Amalekites(Ex. 17:8-15).

Their decision to violate the Law they had promised to keep, and reject all that they had seen and heard since Moses appeared to them in Egypt and gained their deliverance is almost inconceivable. They Holy Spirit revealed the problem and then tied it directly to us.

*For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 And so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Heb. 3:16-4:2*

They saw and heard all the things that were designed by God to create faith, but they refused to believe. They saw the works but never made the application.

## Moses was Faithful in All God's House

These events help us understand that in spite of all the reasons Moses put forth to God about why he was unable to be Israel's deliverer, he was still the best choice by far. What Moses lacked in ability, accomplishments, or confidence were all made insignificant because of one thing. Moses was the only truly faithful man whom God could always rely upon.

*Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. Num. 12:6-7*

This is the most critical element in any servant of God. That he be faithful to all God's words and laws, that he realize he is a steward over God's things and seeks to be faithful to that stewardship.

*Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 1Cor. 4:2-3*

In spite of everything else Moses saw in himself and in spite of all that is recorded about Moses weaknesses (children's circumcision, striking the rock and failing to sanctify God in his words), Moses is remembered and extolled for this one quality.

## From that Generation, Moses appears to be the only Faithful man.

Since Joshua and Caleb were the only men counted worthy to enter the promised land, and God speaks clearly about the rest of Moses' generation as being unfaithful, it is evident there was no one else.

*And may not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not set its heart aright, And whose spirit was not faithful to God... 36 Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, And they lied to Him with their tongue; 37 For their heart was not steadfast with Him, Nor were they faithful in His covenant. Ps. 78:8, 36-37*

*consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, 2 who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house... 5 And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, Heb. 3:1-2, 5*

When Israel brought their request to Aaron, He did not restrain them.

*And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. 4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Ex 32:2-4*

*And when Moses saw that the people were **broken loose**, (for Aaron had **let them loose** for a derision among their enemies,) Ex 32:25 (ASV; ESV)  
the people were **unrestrained** (for Aaron had **not restrained** them) (NKJV)  
the people were **out of control** — for Aaron had let them get **out of control** (NASB)  
the people were **running wild** and that Aaron had let them get **out of control** (NIV)*

To be fair to Aaron, he did not expect the people to carry this as far as they did and did make a feeble effort to sway them, by making the golden calf only a graven image and not another God. But they did not listen and Aaron did nothing more.

*Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!" 5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." 6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Ex 32:4-6*

In addition, Aaron received no support or help from the seventy elders or his own sons.

As noted above it was right at the end of the 40 days and nights that this event occurred, the verse just prior to the one about the golden calf makes this clear.

*And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. 32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; Ex 31:18-32:1*

God then warned Moses about what the people were doing and gave Moses the opportunity to decide whether to keep working with them or allow God to destroy them. God calls them “*your*” people.

*And the Lord said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’” 9 And the Lord said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! 10 Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.” Ex 32:7-10*

Moses chose to plead for Israel and ask God to forgive them. His pleading takes two parts. First, the damage it would do to God’s name and second, the promise he had made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God relented, but when Moses actually saw what they had done, his anger became hot.

*So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses’ anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ... 21 And Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you that you have brought so great a sin upon them?” 22 So Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. You know the people, ... 24 And I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them break it off.’ So they gave it to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out.” Ex 32:19-20*

Moses then took the necessary steps to bring Israel back under the yoke of God’s law they had promised to keep. But the price was not cheap.

*then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, “Whoever is on the Lord’s side — come to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. 27 And he said to them, “Thus says the Lord God of Israel: ‘Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.’” 28 So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. Ex 32:26-29*

## Moses - 6 - God's Lawgiver- 3 Israel leaves Sinai

The children of Israel remain at Sinai for the remainder of the first year, and at the beginning of the second year, God commanded Moses to begin the journey to Canaan.

*Now the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of meeting, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: 2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male individually, 3 from twenty years old and above — all who are able to go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. Num 1:1-4*

This is what gives Numbers its name. The people are numbered at the beginning of Numbers and then after their forty years of wandering in the wilderness they are numbered again.

*And it came to pass, after the plague, that the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: 2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." Num 26:1-3*

### Twenty years old and above, able to go to war:

Reuben	46,500
Simeon	59,300
Gad	45,650
Judah	74,600
Issachar	54,400
Zebulun	57,400

Ephraim	40,500
Manasseh	32,200
Benjamin	35,400
Dan	62,700
Asher	41,500
Naphtali	53,400
<b><u>Twelve Tribes of Israel</u></b>	<b>603,550</b>

After those who were to go to war were numbered, God asked Moses to number the children of Levi who would be ministering in the tabernacle.

14 Then the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: 15 "**Number the children of Levi** by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number **every male from a month old and above.**" 16 So Moses numbered them according to the word of the Lord, as he was commanded. 17 These were the **sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.** Num 3:14-17

### Gershon 7,500 All the Cloth/Skin that were used to cover/screen the Tabernacle

21 From **Gershon** came the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these were the families of the Gershonites. 22 Those who were numbered, according to the number of **all the males from a month old and above** — of those who were numbered there were **seven thousand five hundred.** 23 The families of the **Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward.** 24 And the leader of the father's house of the Gershonites was Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25 The **duties of the children of Gershon** in the tabernacle of meeting included **the tabernacle, the tent with its covering, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26 the screen for the door of the court, the hangings of the court which are around the tabernacle and the altar, and their cords, according to all the work relating to them.**

### Kohath 8,600 All the Furnishing and Utensils in the Tabernacle

27 From **Kohath** came the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these were the families of the Kohathites. 28 According to the number of all the males, from a month old and above, there were **eight thousand six hundred keeping charge of the sanctuary.** 29 The families of the children of **Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle.** 30 And the leader of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites was Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31 **Their duty included the ark, the table, the lampstand, the**



altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, the screen, and all the work relating to them.

## **Merari 6,200 All the boards, bars, Pillars, sockets, etc.**

33 From **Merari** came the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these were the families of Merari. 34 And those who were numbered, according to the number of **all the males from a month old and above, were six thousand two hundred**. 35 The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari was Zuriel the son of Abihail. These were to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36 **And the appointed duty of the children of Merari included the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, its utensils, all the work relating to them, 37 and the pillars of the court all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their cords.**

The final tally of men who could work on the moving of the tabernacle.

the sons of <b>Kohathites</b>	from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old,	2,750	<u>Num 4:34-37</u>
the sons of <b>Gershon</b> ,	from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old,	2,630	<u>N u m 4:38-41</u>
the sons of <b>Merari</b>	from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old,	3,200	<u>N u m 4:42-45</u>
All <b>the Levites</b> ,	from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old,	8,580	<u>N u m 4:46-49</u>

## **The Gift from the 12 Tribes:**

Then the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who were the leaders of the tribes and over those who were numbered, made an offering. 3 And they brought their offering before the Lord, **six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for every two of the leaders**, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle. 4 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 5 "Accept these from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, **to every man according to his service.**" Num 7:2-7

**Two carts and four oxen** he gave to the sons of **Gershon**, according to their service; **four carts and eight oxen** he gave to the sons of **Merari**, according to their service, **Kohath – none**, – theirs was the service of the holy things, they carried on their shoulders. 7:2-9

## **Israel Made Camp and Traveled at the Command of God**

*Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. 18 At the command of the Lord the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the Lord they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. 19 Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel kept the charge of the Lord and did not journey. Num 9:17-20*

## **Israel Leaves Sinai**

*Now it came to pass on the **twentieth day of the second month, in the second year**, that **the cloud was taken up** from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. 12 And **the children of Israel set out** from the Wilderness of Sinai on their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the Wilderness of Paran. 13 So they started out for the first time according to the command of the Lord by the hand of Moses. Num 10:11-13*

# Moses - 7 - Difficulties in the Life of God's Lawgiver

## Israel Complained and Moses Pleaded with God

Now when **the people complained**, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and **His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp.** 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched. 3 So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them. Num 11:1-3

**Now the mixed multitude** who were among them **yielded to intense craving**; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 **We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic**; 6 but now our whole being is dried up; **there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!**" Num 11:4-6

Then **Moses heard the people weeping** throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and the anger of the Lord was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11 So Moses said to the Lord, "**Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the burden of all these people on me?** 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a guardian carries a nursing child,' to the land which You swore to their fathers? 13 **Where am I to get meat to give to all these people?** For **they weep all over me**, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 **I am not able to bear all these people alone**, because the burden is too heavy for me. 15 **If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now — if I have found favor in Your sight — and do not let me see my wretchedness!**" Num 11:10-15

God blessed Moses by giving the Spirit to seventy elders in Israel. Joshua was deeply concerned but Moses manifested both maturity and unselfishness. He did not covet the position of leadership and saw it only as an act of service. Consequently the more help the better and he felt no need to grasp power.

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord, and **he gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle.** 25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and **took of the Spirit that was upon him, and placed the same upon the seventy elders**; and it happened, when the Spirit rested upon them, that they prophesied, although they never did so again. 26 But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they were among those listed, but who had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, one of his choice men, answered and said, "**Moses my lord, forbid them!**" 29 Then Moses said to him, "**Are you zealous for my sake? Oh, that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!**" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and **the elders of Israel.** Num 11:24-30

## Miriam and Aaron Complain about Moses

This passage reveals the loneliness of God's prophet and lawgiver. All the people have grumbled and complained until Moses had begged God to remove him from the earth. With these seventy elders now in place, a time of relief ought to have occurred, but instead, Miriam and Aaron take up the same grumbling and murmuring that the rest of Israel had been doing.

Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So they said, "**Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?**" And the Lord heard it. 3 (Now **the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.**) 4 Suddenly the Lord said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5 Then the Lord came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Num 12:1-6

This is a powerful example of Jesus promise that if we humble ourselves we will be exalted.

But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do

not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Mt. 23:8-12

Jesus also described this in the parable of the wedding feast where he advised we take the lowest seat and allow another to call us to a higher position(Lk 14:7-11) and in the parable of the publican and the pharisee(Lk. 18:9-14). In both he concluded with “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Not only did God exalt Moses, but he humbled Miriam. Moses did not stand up against this jealousy and bitterness. But God stood up for him.

“Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. 7 Not so with My servant Moses; **He is faithful in all My house.** 8 **I speak with him face to face,** Even plainly, and not in dark sayings; And he sees the form of the Lord. **Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant Moses?**” 9 So the anger of the Lord was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, **suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow.** Num 12:6-10

## **Twelve Sent to “Spy Out” the Land of Canaan(Num 13-14; Deut 1:19-46)**

This event shows very clearly the words of Hebrews:

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Heb. 4:2-3

First, God was giving Israel the opportunity to find out how beautiful and productive the land they were about to enter would be.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 “**Send men to spy out the land of Canaan,** which I am giving to the children of Israel; **from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man,** every one a leader among them.” ... 17 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, “Go up this way into the South, and go up to the mountains, 18 and **see what the land is like:** whether **the people who dwell in it are strong or weak, few or many;** 19 whether **the land they dwell in is good or bad;** whether the **cities they inhabit are like camps or strongholds;** 20 whether **the land is rich or poor;** and whether **there are forests there or not. Be of good courage.** And **bring some of the fruit of the land.**” Now the time was the season of the first ripe grapes. Num 13:1-2; 17-20

There was a stark contrast between ten of these “spies” who looked at things only from a heart of unbelief and two who saw things through the eyes of faith. Joshua and Caleb had made good use of their hearts during the ten plagues, opening of the Red Sea and the events at Sinai. They knew God had made a covenant with them and they trusted God. He had already proven His power against Egypt.

But the ten spies did not make this application.

Then they told him, and said: “We went to the land where you sent us. It truly flows with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. 28 Nevertheless **the people who dwell in the land are strong; the cities are fortified and very large; moreover we saw the descendants of Anak there.** 29 The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan.” 30 Then **Caleb quieted the people** before Moses, and said, “**Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.**” 31 But the men who had gone up with him said, “**We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.**” 32 **And they gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land** which they had spied out, saying, “The land through which we have gone as spies is **a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature.** 33 There we saw the giants (the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and **we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight.**” Num. 13:27-33

It was then up to Israel to decide who they would heed and as they had since they left Egypt they chose the path of unbelief. They rejected God and His power and listened to the bad report of the ten spies.

So **all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.** 2 **And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness!"** 3 **Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"** 4 So they said to one another, **"Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."** Num 14:1-4

"Nevertheless you would not go up, but **rebelled against the command of the Lord your God;** 27 and you **complained in your tents,** and said, **'Because the Lord hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.** 28 Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, "The people are greater and taller than we; the cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there." Deut 1:26-28

The next morning, Joshua, Caleb and Moses all tried to reason with them.

But **Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh,** who were among those who had spied out the land, **tore their clothes;** 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: "The land we passed through to spy out is **an exceedingly good land.** 8 **If the Lord delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'** 9 **Only do not rebel** against the Lord, nor fear the people of the land, for they are our bread; their protection has departed from them, and the Lord is with us. Do not fear them." Num 14:6-9

"Then **I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them.** 30 The Lord your God, who goes before you, **He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes,** 31 and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' 32 **Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God,** 33 who went in the way before you to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day. Deut 1:29-33

The people refused all exhortation and reproof. Deciding to stone them all to death, God then intervened.

**And all the congregation said to stone them with stones.** Now the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel. Num 14:10

Once again, Moses becomes the mediator, interceding for the people after God decided to destroy them.

Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 **I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they.**" 13 And Moses said to the Lord: "Then **the Egyptians will hear it,** for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people; that You, Lord, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now **if You kill these people** as one man, then **the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying,** 16 **'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.'** 17 And now, I pray, **let the power of my Lord be great,** just as You have spoken, saying, 18 **'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression;** but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I **pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now.**" Num 14:11-19

Although God pardoned them it was at this time that God decreed that none over forty would enter the land of Canaan except Joshua and Caleb.

Then the Lord said: "**I have pardoned, according to your word;** 21 but truly, as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord — 22 because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 **they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.** Num 14:20-23

Say to them, 'As I live,' says the Lord, **'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. Num 14:28-33**

Now **the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land**, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, **37 those very men who brought the evil report about the land, died by the plague before the Lord. 38 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land. Num 14:36-38**

After the Lord decreed they shall not enter Canaan, they then decide to force God's hand by entering the land of Canaan and seeking to gain possession. Moses warned them, but again they fail to believe.

Then **Moses told these words** to all the children of Israel, and the **people mourned greatly**. **40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!" 41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you." 44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah. Num 14:39-45**

Things have not changed much for the people of the Lord. We still have some who cannot trust in the Lord to work out his plan. They seek to aid Him with organizations that have human wisdom. While God wanted church autonomy, man seeks a human power structure. While God gave all the work of evangelism, edification and benevolence to the local church, man doesn't trust God so he creates missionary societies or human institutions to do the work God gave to the church. They do not have the faith and submission to do things as God commands and then trust in His power and wisdom to do the rest.

# The Gainsaying of Korah

## Introduction:

Since the fall in the garden, the biggest threat to God's children are the deception and lies that appear to be truth. Satan was a liar from the beginning and father of all subsequent lies. All who act as he acts are his children.

*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. (NASB Jn. 8:44)*

*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. 2 Cor 11:13-15*

False teachers and the error they teach is always masked. Among the pure and holy filled with mercy and compassion, there is an attempt to understand and excuse. Because of these gentle emotions, the servants of God can fall prey to their error. Our heart goes out to the young prophet who respected the old prophet and died for the deception. (1Kings 13:11-32). Yet his death was a powerful warning to the righteous servant of God. Love for the truth is more important than compassion for a sinner.

*For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth. Titus 1:10-15*

Jude was deeply concerned about such men "secretly slipping in." Brethren are always willing to accept people into their fellowship. This is why there is always an open door for the unscrupulous and dishonest to enter.

*For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord. (NIV Jude 4)*

Although they can "secretly slip in," their presence cannot long remain hidden for their they were "written about long ago." The phrase "written about long ago" is a single Greek word in the perfect tense.

*"prographo "to write before," is translated "were set forth (unto this condemnation)" in Jude 4, RV (KJV, "ordained"); the evil teachers were "designated of old for this judgment" (cf. 2 Peter 2:3). (Vine's Expository Dictionary NT:4270)*

*"prographo Jude 4 ...corresponds to a usage found in Polyb., ...where prographein has the sense of the publication of lists of influential people who are proscribed. The progegrammenoi ...are proscripti of outlaws..." (Kittel TDWNT 4220)*

The perfect expresses the action as something that occurred long ago but the affects of that action continue right up to the present moment. This action was a "written list" or "designation" a description(*proscripti*) or list of characteristics. It is translated "marked out" (NKJV; NASB); "designated" (ESV); "ordained" (KJV); and "written about" (NIV).

So the false prophets of the Old Covenant mark out and designate the false teachers in the New just as Peter warned: "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you." (2Pet. 2:1-2) As they lived God recorded their lives for us so we would see them clearly. They were written of long ago in the Scriptures to "mark out," "designate," and "describe" them. Thus we have a "written list" upon which we can find their description.

Hence even though they can "creep in secretly," or "secretly slip in" we will always be able to identify them. Peter prophecies that they will continue to the end and their work will be to "secretly

bring in destructive heresies.”

*But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 Peter 2:1*

Jesus revealed that the fruits of a teacher would always identify them (Mt 7:13-20). Hence Jude is simply giving examples of fruits that would reveal them. “The way of Cain,” “the error of Balaam,” and “the gainsaying of Korah” will “mark out,” “designate,” and “describe” them. Cain’s way is the path where man substitutes his desires for God’s commands. Saul, Jeroboam, and Uzziah also took this path. Those who use their knowledge of God and his law for their own wicked ends run in the error of Balaam. The false prophets Jeremiah contended against and Simon the sorcerer ran riotously on that same path. Jude’s final example was Korah.

## Korah

Korah was first introduced in the genealogies of Levi as a cousin of Moses and Aaron (Ex 6:16-21). Kohath was their mutual grandfather.

*16 These are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. ... 18 And the sons of Kohath were **Amram**, **Izhar**, Hebron, and Uzziel. ... 20 Now **Amram** took for himself Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him **Aaron** and **Moses**. And the years of the life of Amram were one hundred and thirty-seven. 21 The sons of **Izhar** were **Korah**, Nepheg, and Zichri. Ex 6:16-21*

God chose the Kohathites to carry articles of the tabernacle and minister in holy things. The only area where Korah was below Aaron was in the priesthood. All was well until the evil report of the 10 spies (Num 13-14; 32:8-11) at Kadesh-Barnea led to Israel’s murmuring and rebellion. God punished them with 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. The anger over that sentence tempted Korah and a few others to question the authority of Moses and Aaron (Num 16:1-3):

*Now Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men; 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the congregation of the LORD? Num. 16:1-3*

## The Key to Korah’s Sin

Though Israel had previously murmured about food and water, this was a new and dangerous variant. They accused Moses and Aaron of “**exalting themselves above**” the rest of the congregation. Remember that Jude identified the nature of Korah’s sin Jude as “**gainsaying, contradicting, and opposing.**”

Korah sought to make a distinction between the authority of God and that of his prophets. When the authority of a prophet is destroyed, the people can rebel and still feel safe. They can be deceived into believing they are serving God while in rebellion. There is grave danger in Korah’s tactic. Blaming the prophet for God’s commands is still a direct attack on God’s authority, but it is subtle and much more difficult to identify. It led to Moses falling on his face. He saw the extreme damage Korah’s charge would create. He therefore gave a challenge that would allow God to show His Will and authority.

*So when Moses heard it, he fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His and who is holy, and will cause him to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to come near to Him. 6 Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; 7 put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be that the man whom the LORD chooses is the holy one. You take too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi! Num 16:4-5*

## They Should Have Been Afraid

After the death of Nadab and Abihu for offering strange fire, these men should have feared such a selection process. Moses deep concern for them led him to warn them of their foolishness. God

created this plan. He chose Moses and Aaron. He chose the sons of Levi. God had given Korah, Moses and Aaron their respective positions. To seek more was an affront to God's authority.

*Then Moses said to Korah, Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 Is it a small thing to you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; 10 and that He has brought you near to Himself, you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? Num 16:8-10*

Moses attempted to reason with them. It was God who had separated them from the congregation and brought them near to Him. Moses and Aaron were doing one portion and Korah and those with him were doing another. They were all working together in the tabernacle and to serve both God and Israel. The only thing God had withheld from Korah was the actual priesthood. Moses' question forced them to consider these implications. Were they really seeking the priesthood?

### **Destroying Respect for God's Priest(The Weakest Link)**

Korah, in his gainsaying sought to move the people away from God's order and plan. His reasoning was cunning and sinister. They focused all their murmuring on Aaron and attempted to lead the people to believe that it was caused by Aaron's weakness. Moses stripped away the guile. It wasn't Aaron, but the LORD they fought.

*Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD. And what is Aaron that you murmur against him? Num 16:11*

Their problem wasn't with Aaron. He was only **the weakest link** in the chain of their dissatisfaction with God. They had murmured and complained about their circumstances since they had left Egypt. Now they were condemned to wander in the wilderness for forty years until all of them were dead. All of this was not due to Moses and Aaron. It was a punishment inflicted by God, so they were actually grumbling and rebelling against God's order. But they couldn't get any traction fighting against God so they focused on Aaron. Moses hoped they would see this before things went any further. They could still be saved if they would repent, and the people would be protected from their terrible influence. Moses pleaded with them to reason with him.

*And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, We will not come up! 13 Is it a small thing that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should keep acting like a prince over us? 14 Moreover you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up Num 16:12-14*

### **Closed Minds / Contempt For Inspiration**

Their answer revealed two important things. First, their mind was closed. They did not want to hear anything more from Moses. They accused him of promising a land flowing with milk and honey but in reality intending all along to kill them in the wilderness. They conveniently overlooked that it was their own sin and God's punishment. They blamed it all on Moses. They accused him of acting as a prince over them. It was a lie, but sounded like truth and swayed them and the people. Though God had given him the position and delegated his authority, they blamed him for all their troubles.

Second, their answer revealed their utter contempt for the Spirit that inspired Moses. They believed that he would attempt to "put out the eyes of these men," or our own idiom: "pull the wool over their eyes." They chose to forget the ten plagues, Mt Sinai, and all God had done through Moses. They didn't want to debate the issue with the facts. It was like saying we will not allow you to confuse us with the facts since our mind is already made up.

### **The Entire Congregation was Swayed**

Though they all slept on it, the morning brought the worst possible outcome. The entire congregation had been swayed. They had been persuaded by this gainsaying that all their problems were Moses' fault. Korah, Dathan and Abiram were now the good guys and Moses and Aaron were the bad guys. God was extremely angry with this rejection of Him and His leaders. He was prepared to destroy the entire nation.

*So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle*



*of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation. 20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. Num 16:18-21*

Though under the influence of error, God expected more of His people. God wanted trust and obedience both of Himself and the prophets He had validated with signs. It angered God that they would follow others who maligned His order and commandments. Moses pleaded with God to forgive them this folly. He then exhorted Israel to separate themselves from this wicked influence

*Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins. 27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little children. Num 16:25-27*

### **Their Death Proved Moses' Favor with God**

Moses then warned the people that what was about to happen was proof of his authenticity. He was God's genuine prophet. He had done nothing of his own will, but had faithfully served God. If they died a common death then the Lord had not sent him, but if the earth swallowed them alive, then they would know these men had rejected God and not just Moses as they had claimed.

*Then Moses said: By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will. 29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are visited by the common fate of all men, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD. Num 16:28-30*

God used Moses words to make a terrible example of Korah. Korah's evil deed of separating the authority of the prophet from God must be dealt with. These events must transpire in such a way as to created the "written list" or "designation" the description(*proscripti*) or list of characteristics. Thus God "marked out" (NKJV; NASB); "designated" (ESV); "ordained" (KJV); and had it "written about" (NIV). There was no way to misunderstand God's attitude toward this reasoning. It is the classic: "may God strike me dead if I am not doing what is right," and God did strike them dead. In two distinct ways. Those standing with Korah were swallowed up by the ground. One can only imagine the screaming, the horror and the terror of that event. Then those 250 who were holding censers suffered the same fate as Nadab and Abihu. They were consumed by fire. God made it so clear that there is no way to misunderstand it. Though Jude prophesied that it would be repeated again and again, God's people have a clear fruit to assess false teachers.

*Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all their goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the congregation. 34 Then all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also! 35 And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense Num 16:31-35*

### **After Death His Gainsaying Continued**

Although one would think that God's clear wrath and punishment would have brought the people to their senses, their deception and blindness was so complete that even God's divine wrath could not sway them. The children of Israel were convinced that Moses and Aaron were the renegades and Korah was the true servant. They actually blamed Moses and Aaron for these deaths

*On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, You have killed the people of the LORD. Num 16:41*

They still believed Korah! Even after God made the example out of them! God killed them because of their rebellion. The Jews were dissatisfied with this and wanted to reject Moses and Aaron. God was very angry that His people still rejected Him:

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment. And they fell on their faces. Num 16:44-45*

A plague made clear God's feeling toward this continued rebellion and ended the matter. When Moses saw the things that were about to happen, he again sought to intercede in behalf of the people.

*So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. Num 16:46-48*

This brought favor from God as Aaron stood between the living and the dead, thus again proving that Aaron was God's priest and Korah a wicked sinner. But fourteen thousand died as a result of this event.

*And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped. Num 16:48-50*

### **The Weakest Link in the Chain**

God used Korah to condemn all who contradict his spokesmen. When a false teacher erodes the respect of God's spokesmen in order to gain power themselves they break God's chain of authority at its weakest link and follow Korah. Jesus' contended with such men in the Scribes and Pharisees who told the multitudes he had a demon and was a friend of publicans and sinners. Paul dealt with it when false teachers in Galatia and Corinth sought to undermine his authority.

*For, His letters, they say, are weighty and strong; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account. 2 Cor 10:10*

Nothing has changed today. Those who teach error must remove all respect for those whose words condemn them. The error being taught will determine who is attacked. Martin Luther attacked James because he did not agree with his words on faith and works. Women wanting to preach and homosexuals who want to live a lifestyle condemned in the Scripture turn on Paul. They accuse him of being a victim of his culture and thus being swayed wrote those words in error. They conveniently forget his inspiration and that his words are the commands of the Lord. Paul identifies those who reject him in this manner as ignorant.

*If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. 1 Cor 14:37-38*

Even Moses can't escape the scoffing and mockery of those who gainsay like Korah. Those who believe in evolution accuse Moses of being ignorant of the true facts regarding the creation and thus allowed error into the sacred Scriptures. They separate the spokesmen from the one he is speaking for. Since all Scripture is given by inspiration and men spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit such a charge only reveals that Korah is alive and well even up to this very day.

*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. 2 Pet. 1:20-21*

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:16-17*

# The Error of Balaam

Jude's concern for brethren facing attacks from men who crept into the church secretly led him to exhort all to contend earnestly for the faith. He used the example of Cain, Balaam and Korah as a means to identify these secret enemies of the God's people.

*Woe unto them! For they went in the way of Cain, and ran riotously in the error of Balaam for hire, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. Jude 1:11*

It is clear from this warning that Christians must become familiar with the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and the gainsaying of Korah. It will give them the ability to identify those who secretly teach error much earlier than otherwise.

The account of Balaam holds many enigmas. The value of his example requires careful study and a comparison of other Scriptures. But it is well worth the effort to gain wisdom and insight.

## Balaam— A Prophet from the Patriarchal Age

Balaam is introduced in Numbers 22 as a man whose blessings and curses led to changes in the fortunes of a nation. Like Melchizedek, he simply appeared in the pages of Scripture with no introduction. Though God had been primarily working through and with Israel, at this time, He was also continuing to work with other godly men just as he had Cain, Abel, Noah, and Abraham. Since Peter identified him as a prophet (2Pet. 2:16), and God spoke through him, we are led to believe that initially he was a good man.

His reputation had reached Balak, and though he lived in Pethor which was in Mesopotamia near the Euphrates River and not far from Ur where Abraham and Lot had initially come from. Grasping for something to stop the children of Israel whom he sees as a great menace, he sent a delegation.

*Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they were many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. . . . 5 Then he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is near the River in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying: Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 Therefore please come at once, curse this people for me, for they are too mighty for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed. Num. 22:2-3,5-6*

The initial encounter proceeded exactly as we would expect of a servant of God. The prophet explained that he must know God's will first. As Balaam presented himself to God, God spoke to him openly. He asked who the men were and Balaam gave God an exact account of all that he knew. God then responded that it was an impossible mission because God had promised and intended to bless Israel and nothing Balaam could say or do would change that.

*And he said to them, "Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the Lord speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam. 9 Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who are these men with you?" 10 So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, saying, 11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.'" 12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed." 13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the Lord has refused to give me permission to go with you." Num. 22:8-13*

Balaam knew the exact reason why he could not do Balak's bidding. God intended to bless Israel and there was only failure if he accepted this mission. If the account had ended here, no one would have doubted Balaam's fidelity, and if Balak had accepted it and sought peace with Israel, the matter would have ended very well.

## The People of Moab were Never in any Danger

God had charged Israel not to touch Moab because of their relationship to Lot.

*Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day.*

Gen. 19:36-38

*“And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from Elath and Ezion Geber, we turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. 9 Then the Lord said to me, **‘Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession,** because **I have given Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession.**” Deut. 2:8-9*

*“So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, 17 that the Lord spoke to me, saying: 18 **‘This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab.** 19 And **when you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them,** for **I will not give you any of the land of the people of Ammon as a possession,** because I **have given it to the descendants of Lot as a possession.**” Deut. 2:16-19*

They were in no danger! But Balak was going to force his own way, believing Balaam could be bought with the right price! He added as many enticements as he could devise, even offering Balaam to set his own price.

*Then Balak again sent princes, more Numerous and more honorable than they. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17 for I will certainly **honor you greatly,** and I will **do whatever you say to me.** Therefore please come, curse this people for me. Num. 22:15-17*

### **Balaam’s Lust Led him to Madness**

Although his words were still proper, something was stirring in his heart.

*Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, “Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, please, you also stay here tonight, that I may know what more the Lord will say to me.” Num. 22:18-19*

Think about it. God had already told him that he could not curse Israel because they were blessed. No matter what Balaam did, God would not heed him so he would fail in whatever he tried to do. What more was there to speak to God about?

Although he affirmed he could not do “less or more,” something was stirring in his heart, leading him to seek to go even though God had already said “*You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed.*” He knew God did not want him to go but sought to go anyway. This is what Paul warned the Romans against, setting up the necessary provisions to be able to fulfil a lust by getting as close as one can to it:

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Rom. 13:14*

Multitudes of people have followed Balaam here. They know God has forbidden any contact with an activity, but they still seek to get as close as they can to it when they should be fleeing it!

God has already told him that it is an impossible task. He will set himself up for persecution, mocking and the anger of Balaam and his honorable men. He can’t curse Israel, he can’t do any of the things Balak wants him to do. But here he is asking God to allow him to go.

*And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, “If the men come to call you, rise and go with them; but only the word which I speak to you — that you shall do.” 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab. Num. 22:20-21*

When it began is not made clear from the account, but by the morning as he arose, his heart was changed and the account takes a bitter turn. Though a prophet, his own lusts and desires had been working and fomenting through the night and when he arose in the morning and saddled his donkey, Peter revealed his heart was filled with madness.

*They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who **loved the wages of unrighteousness;** 16 but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man’s voice restrained **the madness of the prophet.** 2Pet. 2:15-16*

Because this has happened over and over again, we can chart the course of Balaam’s fall into madness. “*paraphronia* ... “madness” (from *para*, “contrary to,” and *phren*, “the mind”). Literally, he was “*beside himself*” in his mind. James outlined the process we all know so well.

*Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. Jas. 1:13-15*

The temptation began with the arrival of the men and the promise of a greater reward. That enticement had already been removed with God's earlier command, but Balak created this enticement. Just as Judas was tempted by his greed and fell from the position Jesus had given him (Acts 2:16-26), so Balaam was sorely tempted and the process of his fall began.

His weakness becomes evident as soon as the new and more noble group of men arrived. This new offer led to a subtle change in the prophet. Balaam knew God's will regarding Israel being blessed. He knew God had forbidden him to go. There was nothing further to ask God. He was seeking a loop hole as so many others who have been tempted into error. Since nothing changed, except the amount of money and honor, Balaam was succumbing to his greed when he again asked God to allow him to go.

There is both audacity and presumption in this second request. God had forbidden it. He had protected Balaam from his lust, and gave him a way of escape.

*No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Cor. 10:13*

In his second request, Balaam sought to move God's barrier, so he could get closer to his own lusts. Though God allowed him to go, the anger he felt clearly revealed that Balaam's rebellion was already developing.

*But God was angry because he was going, and the angel of the LORD took his stand in the way as an adversary against him. Now he was riding on his donkey and his two servants were with him. Num. 22:22*

The angel of the LORD was Israel's protector. He spoke to Moses at the burning bush, helped them through the wilderness, and was leading them into the promised land.

*And the **Angel of the Lord** appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. Ex. 3:2-3*

***"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. 22 But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. Ex. 23:20-23***

*Then the **Angel of the Lord** came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: "I led you up from Egypt and brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall tear down their altars.' But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'" Judg. 2:1-4*

Though still in the infancy of desire, Balaam had changed positions and sides. At that moment he was no longer a submissive prophet. His friendship with the world was even then leading him to become an enemy to God.

*Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. James 4:4*

Three times the angel of the LORD sought to kill him, but God graciously spared him and revealed to Balaam the truth about what he was doing.

### **The Voice of a Donkey Restrained the Madness for a Time**

As Peter noted, as Balaam left home on the donkey his heart was filling with the madness of lust and desire. God allowed the donkey to speak. In this way Balaam "was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained **the madness of the prophet**. The account is clear, since Balaam had changed sides (madness), the "angel of the LORD" was standing up against him.

Three different times God allowed the donkey to save the life of the prophet, but in his ignorance, he was angry with the donkey, presumably for slowing him down in his desire to get to Balak and find a way to get the reward. The first time was only an annoyance.

*Now the donkey saw the **Angel of the Lord** standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. Num. 22:23*

The second time, Balaam was injured and he again took out his anger on the donkey.

*Then the **Angel of the Lord** stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, with a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the **Angel of the Lord**, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. Num. 22:24-25*

The third time appeared to be open rebellion (very similar to what he himself was doing with God) and his anger flared to its highest level.

*Then the **Angel of the Lord** went further, and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the **Angel of the Lord**, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff. Num. 22:26-27*

At that moment, he was prepared for the powerful lesson God had prepared for him. So God allowed the donkey speak and "stay the madness of the prophet."

*Then the Lord opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?" 29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, for now I would kill you!" 30 So the donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since I became yours, to this day? Was I ever disposed to do this to you?" And he said, "No." 31 Then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the **Angel of the Lord** standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. Num. 22:28-32*

The words are not impressive, but the fact that the donkey was speaking them was startling. Balaam is so angry that he doesn't even stop to consider that the hand of God is in the event. Thus his madness is revealed, first in the fact that the donkey speaking does not shock and bring him to his senses. In his anger he desired to kill his only means of transportation, again revealing the terrible nature of this lust that created such anger.

At that moment, God allowed Balaam to observe the Angel of the LORD, with a sword drawn in His hand. How amazing and impressive that was! Fear and terror and hopefully joined to reverence and awe now replaced the anger and he fell on his face.

The words of the Angel expressed the terrible nature of Balaam's position. Even though the lusts were only in his mind, God was prepared to kill him and remove the threat he posed. The example here is a fearful one. Rebellion against the Lord that leads to danger for his people created both wrath and vengeance. Grace spared Balaam this time, but he did not profit from it.

*And the Angel of the Lord said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out to stand against you, because your way is perverse before Me. 33 The donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live." Num. 22:32-33*

## **Balaam Reaped What He Sowed**

Balaam did not argue with the angel, instead he confessed his sin and manifested his repentance by asking to turn back. Many have questioned the genuine nature of this repentance, but since we can't see into the heart, it is always best to put the best possible motive, that godly sorrow had led to a change of heart and a desire to change the course of life.

*And Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, I have sinned, for I did not know that you were standing in the way against me. Now then, if it is displeasing to you, I will turn back. 35 But the angel of the LORD said to Balaam, Go with the men, but you shall speak only the word which I shall tell you. So Balaam went along with the leaders of Balak. Num. 22:34-35*

There is no easy answer to why God changed His mind and commanded Balaam to go. Perhaps the

decisions made that night and the madness Balaam had just recovered from had hardened Balaam's heart as Pharaoh's had been and all that was left was to use Balaam for the important purpose Jude and Jesus used him to illustrate later.

*Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? 22 What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, 24 even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Rom. 9:21-24*

Everything changed when Balaam sought to go beyond God's Word. God had told him not to go. If he had stayed home, he would not be in this terrible predicament. He had sown to his flesh when he made the second request, now he would reap corruption.

*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. Gal. 6:7-8*

He must go and pronounce blessings upon Israel. God had sought to spare him, but he had forced himself into a position where he could only anger Balak or God. Balaam was now under the strict control of the command of God to bless Israel. At the same time he has been hired by Balak and offered the greatest rewards to curse them. By his coming he has agreed to the conditions. So he was unequally yoked.

*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 2 Cor. 6:14-16*

Yoked to God by command and yoked to Balak by contract. A bitter place to be, but he was placed there by his own lusts.

### **Balaam Tested Three Times**

Balak is waiting and meets with him soon after his arrival. He rebuked Balaam for not coming sooner. Balaam's warning not to expect too much from him is both tepid and lukewarm. I don't have any power in this, only what God tells me can I say.

*Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able to honor you?" 38 And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." Num. 22:37-39*

The outcome of the first "oracle" took Balaam further and further away from the honor and wealth he had sought by coming and also greatly angered Balak.

*Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed them bountifully!" 12 So he answered and said, "Must I not take heed to speak what the Lord has put in my mouth?" Num. 23:11-12*

The second "oracle" took Balaam even further into God's side as Israel's ally. This is not where he had wanted to be and Balak was even more angry.

*Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all!" 26 So Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not tell you, saying, 'All that the Lord speaks, that I must do'?" Num. 23:25-26*

The third "oracle" seems to bring Balaam all the way back to God's side and completely against Balak and what he sought. He reaped Balak's scathing words at their parting, words he would not have heard if he had submitted to God's word the first time. Yet in every way, he did exactly what God wanted him to do.

*Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, "I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed them these three times! 11 Now therefore, flee to your place. I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the Lord has kept you back from honor." 12 So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the Lord, to do good or bad of my own will. What the Lord says, that I must*

... speak'? ... 25 So Balaam rose and departed and returned to his place; Balak also went his way. Num. 24:10-13, 25

## **Balaam Succumbed to Temptation**

While the account continues without Balaam, we will find out later that he was still there and that he was the mastermind behind the events that caused many in Israel to sin and made God so angry that 24,000 men in Israel died. We have three passages that must be carefully studied and compared with each other in order to see exactly what happened next.

*Now Israel remained in Acacia Grove, and the people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and the anger of the Lord was aroused against Israel. ... 9 And those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand. Num 25:1-3,9*

*Harass the Midianites, and attack them; 18 for they harassed you with their schemes by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor. . . . Num. 25:17-18*

*Look, these women caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Num. 31:16-17*

*But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality. Rev. 2:14*

After reading these passages we come up with the following facts.

- 1 The people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. Israel was joined to Baal of Peor
- 2 They invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods.
- 3 Those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.
- 4 The Midianites.. harassed you with schemes ... they seduced you in the matter of Peor.
- 5 these women caused Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the Lord in the incident of Peor.
- 6 Balaam taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality.

We have to fit all these facts into the narrative. Clearly, at some point after their final discussion, as Balaam went his way, the madness returned and there was no donkey to stop it. He succumbed to the temptation of Balak's offer. His love of money led him to stray from the faith and pierce himself with many sorrows(1Tim. 6:10). His knowledge of God, God's Law, and the weaknesses of the children of Israel led him to devise a scheme that would force God to curse Israel. He taught Balak about stumbling blocks. He used his knowledge of God and his people to destroy them. He taught Balak that if they took the beautiful women of Midian, dressed them seductively and enticed Israel, many would commit fornication and idolatry. Balaam knew God would curse Israel if they were seduced into sin. What a wicked deceitful plan this was! It led the weak in Israel to stumble by putting evil before them, hoping they would fall. That in turn led God to curse Israel and 24,000 died in a plague.

But Balaam did not care about the souls and lives of others. He only cared about the money and reward. He "*loved the wages of unrighteousness.*"

*forsaking the right way they have gone astray, having followed the way of Balaam, the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Pet 2:15*

This was Balaam's error. It is hard to imagine that anyone could be so deceitful, malicious, greedy and evil as to destroy the souls of others for money. But though Balaam may have been the first, he was not the last. Peter was strongly warning our brethren in his day and also us today there will be men who call themselves preachers of righteousness but are following the way of Balaam.

What should we learn from these warnings? Two points stand out! First from a personal perspective, we must destroy lust while it is in infancy. If Balaam had conquered his lust for money and honor while still home he would have avoided becoming such a despicable man. No one is



immune from the terrible consequences of allowing sin to become “full grown.”

Second, Balaam reveals the depravity of what greed can do to others. A man will exploit even the souls of men for worldly gain. All unscrupulous men who preach error and use their knowledge of God and his people for their own destructive ends are walking in the error of Balaam. We are forewarned, they did it in Galatia, and are still doing it today.

*They zealously court you, but for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. Gal. 4:17*

*Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Acts 20:30*

*And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: 2Pet. 2:3(ASV)*

*By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; 2Pet.2:3(NKJV)*

Balaam did not have long to enjoy his “wages of unrighteousness.” One of Moses final acts before he died was to take God’s vengeance on Median and Balaam for these wicked schemes.

*And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Take vengeance for the children of Israel on the Midianites. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people. Num. 31:1-2*

*They killed the kings of Midian with the rest of those who were killed-- Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword. Num. 31:8*

What a sordid story! But one God repeated three times in the NT(1Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev 2:14). This is a story we must learn and apply today. There are many teachers today who are walking after this example. People who devise denominations that allow what God has forbidden. People sizing up the weaknesses of others and using lusts as a basis for false teaching that brings fame and fortune to them.

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Tim 4:3-5*

*For when they speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. 19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 2Pet. 2:18-19*

*8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ... 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, Col 2:8-9 18-19*

There will always be those who:

*have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, (NKJV)*

*for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam (NASB)*

*abandoned themselves for the sake of gain to Balaam's error (ESV)*

*they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error (NIV)*

We must be aware of such things and protect our own hearts from those attempt to use our own desires against us.

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, 12 teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Titus 2:11-14*

## **Moses - 8 - The Sin of Moses**

Four different times during the life of Moses the wickedness and rebellion of the people led God to threaten / offer to destroy Israel and begin again with Moses. Each time Moses interceded and asked God to pardon.

### **1. After the Golden Calf**

*They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'" 9 And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it is a stiff-necked people! 10 Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation." Ex 32:8-10*

#### **Moses Intercession and God's Forgiveness**

*Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.'" 14 So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people. Ex 32:11-14*

### **2. After the Twelve Spies Returned**

*Then the Lord said to Moses: "How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will make of you a nation greater and mightier than they." 13 And Moses said to the Lord: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. Num 14:11-14*

#### **Moses Intercession and God's Forgiveness**

*And Moses said to the Lord: "Then the Egyptians will hear it, for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell it to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, Lord, are among these people; that You, Lord, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now if You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 16 'Because the Lord was not able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' 17 And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18 'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation.' 19 Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, according to the greatness of Your mercy, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now." 20 Then the Lord said: "I have pardoned, according to your word; Num 14:13-21*

### **3. Twice in the Rebellion of Korah - First when Korah gathered the Congregation**

*And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to all the congregation. 20 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 "Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." Num 16:19-21*

#### **Moses Intercession**

*Then they fell on their faces, and said, "O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the congregation?" Num 16:22*

#### **4. Second, after God made an Example of Korah and Israel Rejected it.**

*On the next day all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the Lord." 42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly the cloud covered it, and the glory of the Lord appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting. 44 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment." Num 16:41-45*

#### **Moses Intercession**

*So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the Lord. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped. Num 16:46-49*

In spite of all Moses had done in the past to help and protect the children of Israel, even Moses was finally worn down by their rebellion and lack of faith in God. While God's wrath was measured and focused, Moses' wrath did not work the righteousness of God.

*So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God. James 1:19-20*

#### **1. Moses was provoked (Num 20:1-8)**

The children of Israel wanted something they did not have. "There was no water for the congregation." Instead of asking God for water with a humble and grateful heart, "they gathered together against Moses and Aaron," and "contended with Moses." They then made serious charges against them. "Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness," "why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place?" Israel blamed Moses and Aaron for all their problems. Instead of repentance and a patient waiting, they wished they were dead. This murmuring began at the Red Sea (Ex 14:10-12), and was their reaction every time they were forced to face adversity.

#### **At the Red Sea**

*Then they said to Moses, "**Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness?** Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? 12 Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, '**Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?**' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness." Ex 14:11-12*

#### **When Hungry**

*Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said to them, "**Oh, that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.**" Ex 16:2-3*

#### **When Thirsty**

*Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?" 3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "**Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?**" 4 So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me!" Ex 17:2-4*

## **General Murmuring**

Now when **the people complained**, it displeased the Lord; for the Lord heard it, and His anger was aroused. So the fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people cried out to Moses, and when Moses prayed to the Lord, the fire was quenched. 3 So he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord had burned among them. Num 11:1-3

## **Mixed multitude yielded to intense craving**

Now the mixed multitude who were among them yielded to intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: "Who will give us meat to eat? 5 **We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 but now our whole being is dried up; there is nothing at all except this manna before our eyes!**" Num 11:4-6

## **After the spies returned**

And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "**If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the Lord brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?**" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt." Num 14:2-4

## **Murmuring about Discouragement**

Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very discouraged on the way. 5 **And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread."** 6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. Num 21:4-7

We must learn not to "murmur as some of them" (1 Cor 10:10). When we feel anger or frustration over something the apostles taught, we accept it as the word of God (1 Th 2:14) and we do not murmur!

In all these previous acts of rebellion, Moses and Aaron had conducted themselves as holy men of God. They warned Israel that their murmuring was against God and they never took it personally. This time was different. They became angry. Many who have gone to a brother to help, and been personally attacked for it, can empathize with Moses. Yet such anger must be carefully contained. It is very danger for it led Moses to lose sight of his reverence and respect toward God and his commandments.

God saw what Moses did in his anger as a lack of reverence and obedience toward him. Most of us have seen this today. A brother or sister, offended by mistreatment by another in the church, decides "I will never worship with them again." So they take out their anger against a brother on God (Heb 10:23-25). When anger against sin leads us to commit sin we have done as Moses. No matter how unfairly we are treated by brethren it must never affect our service to God.

## **2. Moses and Aaron went to God for instructions 20:6-9**

Moses had been faithful to God from the moment he entered Egypt, always submissive and obedient. The Holy Spirit summed up his life: "And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant" (Heb 3:5). After hearing their murmuring, complaints and accusations, "Moses and Aaron went ... to the door of the tent of meeting, and fell upon their faces." They waited for God's judgment and instructions. God told them to "take the rod; ... gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." Clearly there was nothing difficult to understand or to do in these commands.

### **3. The Sin of Moses and Aaron 20:10-11**

From subsequent events, it is clear that Moses was filled with righteous indignation. It does not appear that the anger occurred in God's presence. So it either developed on the way to pick up the rod or after he again came among them. *"Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock; and he said to them, Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock? Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank."*

Some time later, *"Jehovah said unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."* God charged them with insubordination. Their conduct had publicly displayed a lack of reverence and respect. God determined that this needed an equally public punishment. As punishment for this sin, both would die before entering the promised land.

#### **What did Moses do wrong?**

God said Moses *"failed to sanctify me in the eyes of the people,"* but did not specify exactly what this failure was. First, Moses fell into the same error as Nadab and Abihu. They offered *"strange fire which he had not commanded them"* (Lev 10:2). God had told Moses to *"speak to the rock,"* but the account states *"Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice."* Clearly, Moses did more than God commanded. He had no authority to strike that rock. As Paul later warned the Corinthians, Moses had to learn not to *"go beyond what is written,"* (1Cor 4:6). He was told to speak to the rock(which he did not do), but given no authority to strike the rock. God later charged him with this error: *"ye rebelled against my word at the waters of Meribah"*

*"Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. Num 20:24-25*

*For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.) Num 27:14*

At God's word he could "speak to the rock," but in rebellion he struck it.

Added to this was a second sin. The Psalmist revealed that *"it went ill with Moses"* because *"he spake unadvisedly with his lips."*

*They angered Him also at the waters of strife, So that it went ill with Moses on account of them; 33 Because they rebelled against His Spirit, So that he spoke rashly(unadvisedly asv) with his lips. Ps. 106:32-33*

What did he say? *"Hear now, ye rebels; shall we bring you forth water out of this rock?* This was a serious failure. There was a problem with that **"we."** By striking the rock and using this pronoun Moses *"believed not in me, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel."*

Moses sin established the truth that specific commands must be obeyed exactly as given without human input. When the organization of the church or its worship is modified because God didn't say we couldn't, we are following in the steps of Moses. The truth is that if God doesn't say we can, then we cannot. If Moses could not strike a rock, then elders must not oversee any portion(even the money) of any flock *"not among them."* (1Pet 5:1-4).

#### **The Results**

Though some today believe that the ends can justify the means and if good comes from an addition to God's commands God will be so pleased with results he will overlook the means. Clearly the results of Moses actions were exactly what he hoped for, the water came from the rock. By today's reasoning, Moses must be right because it resulted in good. Clearly God saw it very differently. Moses and Aaron were sinning in the manner in which they fulfilled the command.

The water coming of the rock did nothing to remove the guilt nor the consequences of their sin. No matter how much good comes from sin, sin still destroys the one practicing it. Those who say *"let us do evil that good may come"* will be those whose *"condemnation is just,"* (Rom 3:8) It was Jesus who quoted Isaiah and applied it to his own generation *"And in vain they worship Me, teaching as*

*doctrines the commandments of men.*” No amount of good can change that! When Moses used a command of men to strike a rock he *“believed not in me, to sanctify me.”*

### **Moses was Forgiven, but the Consequences Remained**

It is important to see this application of Moses sin. Though the water came, Moses was severely punished. Punished in a way that no amount of repentance could remove. *“And I besought Jehovah at that time... **Let me go over, I pray thee, and see the good land that is beyond the Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon. But Jehovah was wroth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter**”* (Deut 3:23-27).

That God forgave the sin is obvious. Moses appeared in glory with Elijah and spoke to Jesus when he was transfigured (Lk 9:28-31). But repentance did not remove the consequences. Though Moses continued to plead with God about these consequences, God finally told him, *“speak no more unto me of this matter.”*

Many today would do well to hear God on this. All sins can be forgiven. But the consequences of some sins can't be removed by God's forgiveness. Those who seek to avoid the consequences of their sin by saying “God would want me to be happy” are ignoring the lesson taught from the sin of Moses.

We can grieve with Moses over the consequences of his sin, and we can learn to respect God's judgment over such conduct. *“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Eph 2:10).

# **Moses - 9 – Moses' Final Days and Final Words**

## **Death of Miriam and the Waters of Meribah**

The final days of Moses began with his sin at Kadesh. Miriam had just died when the children of Israel had murmured and contended with him about water.

*Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there. 2 Now there was no water for the congregation; so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died when our brethren died before the Lord! Num. 20:1-3*

In his anger and wrath, he had did respond properly and failed to honor God in both word and deed. Because of this failure, both he and Aaron were not allowed to enter the promised land. This event was then called "the water of Meribah" because of Israel's sin.

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them." 13 This was the water of Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the Lord, and He was hallowed among them. 14 Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom. Num 20:12-14*

After Edom refused to allow them passage through their land, they journeyed from Kadesh to Mt Hor. There Aaron died for the events at "the water of Meribah," thus revealing that he too had been banned from entering the promised land because of those events.

*Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. 23 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: 24 "Aaron shall be gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. Num 20:22-25*

## **The Death of Aaron**

God made a big event of Aaron's death. Moses, Aaron and his son Eleazar go up to Mt Hor while all the congregation watches the event. Moses stripped Aaron of the garments of the High Priest and put them on Eleazar his son. No mention is made of how Aaron died, but he died after the clothes were removed and before Moses and his son leave the Mountain.

*Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; 26 and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered to his people and die there." 27 So Moses did just as the Lord commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28 Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29 Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron thirty days. Num 20:25-29*

## **The Bronze Serpent**

Soon after Aaron's death, Moses must again deal with the murmuring and grumbling of the people. God again manifested his anger in sending fiery serpents among the people. Although the people begged for mercy and Moses prayed for them, God did not remove them.

*And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." 6 So the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. 7 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. 8 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived. Num 21:5-9*

Instead God had Moses make a bronze serpent and put it on a pole. Then if they were bitten they

had to look upon that brass serpent to be healed from the bite. Jesus later used this event as a type of Himself.

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Jn 3:14-17*

## **Balaak and Balaam**

As Israel continued the journey to Canaan, they seek passage first through the land of the Amorites where Sihon came out to battle and was defeated(Num 21:21-27). As they sought to pass through Bashan, Og came out to battle and he too was defeated(Num 21:33-35). It is immediately after this that Balak hires Balaam and Balaam counsels Balak to put a stumbling block in front of Israel and 24,000 men in Israel perished.

## **Moses Was the Last of his Generation**

Immediately after the plague caused by Balaam's counsel to Balak, God asked Moses to number Israel for the second time.

*And it came to pass, after the plague, that the Lord spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: 2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." ... just as the Lord commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt." Num 26:1-4*

The timing of this census was explained at the end of the chapter.

*But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the Lord had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Num 26:64-65*

Hence in this plague the very last individuals who had been numbered in the first census had died and there was no one except Caleb and Joshua. So Moses was then truly alone.

## **Summing up a Life**

Moses was eighty years old when he called by God to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt and he faithfully led them through the wilderness. Our time frame is based on his age when he began and his age when he died.

*And Moses was **eighty years old** and Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. Ex 7:7*

*Moses was **one hundred and twenty years old** when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days. So the days of weeping and mourning for Moses ended. Deut 34:7-8*

So for forty years, Moses led Israel, but during those same forty years, God's wrath was being poured out upon them because of their unbelief.

*And **I have led you forty years** in the wilderness. Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. Deut 29:5-6*

*For **forty years** I was grieved with that generation, And said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, And they do not know My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" Ps 95:10-11*

*For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry **forty years**? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. Heb 3:16-19*

Comparing the two census' we get an idea of the changes that had occurred after 603,550 men died.



## Israel Numbered at the beginning and end of Numbers.

	1:17-54	26:1-65	
<u>Reuben</u>	46,500	43,730	- 2,770
<u>Simeon</u>	59,300	22,200	- 37,100
<u>Gad</u>	45,650	40,500	- 5,150
<u>Judah</u>	74,600	76,500	+ 1,900
<u>Issachar</u>	54,400	64,300	+ 9,900
<u>Zebulun</u>	57,400	60,500	+ 3,100
<u>Israel</u>	603,550	601,730	- 1,820
<u>Levi</u>	22,000	23,000	+ 1,000

	1:17-54	26:1-65	
<u>Ephraim</u>	40,500	32,500	- 8,000
<u>Manasseh</u>	32,200	52,700	+ 20,500
<u>Benjamin</u>	35,400	45,600	+ 10,200
<u>Dan</u>	62,700	64,400	+ 1,700
<u>Asher</u>	41,500	53,400	+ 11,900
<u>Naphtali</u>	53,400	45,400	- 8,000
<u>Israel</u>	603,550	601,730	- 1,820

### Moses Sought a Leader to Replace Him

As soon as Israel arrived at Mt Abarim, God informed Moses that he had reached the end of his life and it was time for him to die.

*Now the Lord said to Moses: "Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These are the waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.) Num 27:12-14*

Moses' first concern was for those who would be left. He wanted to be certain they had a leader.

*Then Moses spoke to the Lord, saying: 16 "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord may not be like sheep which have no shepherd." 18 And the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him; 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and inaugurate him in their sight. 20 And you shall give some of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient. Num 27:15-21*

### Moses Last Service as Leader

God reveals to Moses that the time had finally come for Moses to finish his work. He wants the terrible curse of Balaam to be punished.

*And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall be gathered to your people." 3 So Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm some of yourselves for war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the Lord on Midian. 4 A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war." Num 31:1-4*

### The Request of Reuben and Gad

The land beyond the Jordan was perfect for raising livestock. It caught the eye of Reuben and Gad and they decided to make a request.

*Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of Jazer and the land of Gilead, that indeed the region was a place for livestock, 2 the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, 3 "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Shebam, Nebo, and Beon, 4 the country which the Lord defeated before the congregation of Israel, is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." 5 Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."*

### Num 32:1-5

From Moses response, it is evident they did not intend to go beyond the Jordan to help the other tribes gain their inheritance. This led Moses to strongly rebuke them. Hence they changed their request to include the offer that they would first help their brethren then they would come and dwell there.

*And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? 7 Now why will you discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord has given them? 8 Thus your fathers did when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea to see the land. ... 16 Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, 17 but we ourselves will be armed, ready to go before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; Num 32:6-9, 16-17*

*Then Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the Lord for the war, 21 and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the Lord until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, 22 and the land is subdued before the Lord, then afterward you may return and be blameless before the Lord and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. Num 32:20-23*

At some point in this discussion half the tribe of Manasseh also joined in this plan.

*So Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country. Num 32:33-34*

## **Moses Final Address to Israel**

The book of Deuteronomy is an address given by Moses as his final opportunity to influence them. Much like Paul's words to Timothy, Moses reproved, rebuked and exhorted them. The name Deuteronomy is a compound Greek word. *deuteros* is second and *nomos* is law. Hence this book is called "second law"

*deuteronomy* ... In Hebrew 'elleh ha-debharim , "these are the words"; in Greek, *deuteronomion*, "second law"; whence the Latin *deuteronomii*, and the English *Deuteronomy*. (ISBE)

It is broken into several distinct discourses

### **1 Historical Overview of their father's refusal to enter the promised land and God's gracious mercy in allowing them to conquer the nations on the east of the Jordan 1-3**

*1 These are the words which Moses spoke to all Israel on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the plain opposite Suph ... 3 Now it came to pass in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him as commandments to them, 5 On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying, 6 "The Lord our God spoke to us in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long enough at this mountain. Deut 1:1, 3, 5-6*

### **2 Moses gives an overview of the Law he had revealed to them at Sinai. 4-26:19**

*"Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers is giving you. 2 You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you. .... 44 Now this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. 45 These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, ... 5:1 5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. Deut 4:1-3, 44-45; 5:1*

### **3 Future Blessings and Curses based on their choices and conduct. 27-30**

*Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today. 2 And it shall be, on the day when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the Lord your God is giving you, that you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash*

them with lime. 3 You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the Lord your God is giving you, 'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the Lord God of your fathers promised you. 4 Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, that on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. Deut 27:1-5

## **Instructions regarding the Blessings and Curses on Mt Ebal and Gerazim(Deut 27-29)**

*"These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; 13 and these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. Deut 27:12-13*

### **A. When these curses come, God will still show mercy if you repent**

*Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, 2 and you return to the Lord your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 that the Lord your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you. Deut 30:1-3*

### **B. Moses warned that life and good death and evil, are the choice they have to make.**

*"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; Deut 30:15-20*

### **C. Moses Final Instructions**

*When Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2 And he said to them: "I am one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer go out and come in. Also the Lord has said to me, 'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' 3 The Lord your God Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. Joshua himself crosses over before you, just as the Lord has said ... 7 Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, "Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. 9 So Moses wrote this law and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and to all the elders of Israel. 31:1-3, 7, 9*

## **4 God commanded Moses to write a Song. Deut. 31-32**

*14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that I may inaugurate him." So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15 Now the Lord appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle. 16 And the Lord said to Moses: "Behold, you will rest with your fathers; and this people will rise and play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go to be among them, and they will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. ... 16 Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel. ... 21 Then it shall be, when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, 31:9, 14-16, 21*

*Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23 Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, "Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you." 24 So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 25 that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying: 26 "Take this Book of the Law, and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there as a witness against you; 29 For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will*

do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands.” Deut 31:22-27, 29

## **5 Moses Saw the Land of Canaan from the Top of Mt Nebo(Pisgah) and then Died.**

*1 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the Lord showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan ... 5 So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but no one knows his grave to this day. 7 Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died. His eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished. ... 10 But since then there has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, 11 in all the signs and wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, 12 and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel. Deut 34:1, 5-7, 10-12*