

Genesis

*An Overview of the Scriptures, by
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Listen closely! Pay close attention to every word, and every detail. The Bible is not just another book. **It is the Word of God.** Working through human agents of His choosing, God reveals Himself to us.

How do I know this?

If there is a Creator, even if He is not visible and may not speak with an audible voice, we would be able to see evidence of His existence in His creation. I believe this to be the case. The study of science has revealed to us the complexity and intelligent design that exist throughout the universe, this planet earth, and these human bodies. These things could not be a haphazard accident of chance. God's fingerprint ... His creativity and wisdom ... is seen throughout.

And if there is a chance that the Creator has chosen to communicate with humanity, we should be all ears. Many have claimed to be prophets, speaking for God. Many writings are claimed to be inspired by God. To consider all those claiming to be prophets and all writings claiming to be from God would be a detailed study in itself. The reader is encouraged to consider the various perspectives offered by those that have undertaken such a study, and to think for himself. In consideration of this question, and having read many different perspectives, I have come to the conclusion that the Bible, and the Bible alone, is God's revelation to man.

The traditional church (all denominations) is largely responsible for faulty Bible translations and teachings that make it appear to be flawed. But if we study the Bible in its purest form, and if we consider the message it contains ... **leading to a perfect conclusion at the end of the ages** ... I believe we can see very clearly the **fingerprint of God.** We see His great power, wisdom and love ... taking a very flawed, stubborn and helpless mankind and bringing about a solution that ultimately reconciles ALL to Himself. A grand conclusion to the ages is what we see in God's Word ... not the imperfections and cruelties of an eternal torment that are taught by the traditional church. The church's misunderstandings and false teachings blaspheme God, and make Him appear to be an unforgiving tyrant. But throw

off the erroneous teachings of the traditional church and examine only the Bible itself, and we see a God of love, and a God that is bringing about the **perfect solution for the needs of mankind** ... ALL of mankind. And so, from a study of the evidence, I believe we can see that the Bible is not just another book, but the very word of God.

As we begin in Genesis and proceed, we note that God **progressively reveals** Himself. In the beginning, relatively few details are provided. But as we read on God reveals more concerning His will, His character, and that which lies in store for mankind.

Now let us set aside those things we think we already know ... those things that were taught to us in Sunday school, in church, or in books we may have read. Let us read the Bible afresh ... so as not to miss any of the details in this revelation from God.

IN THE BEGINNING^{1:1}

The word “Genesis” is not found in the original Hebrew, but was added much later as a title for the book. The Hebrew simply begins, “In beginning.” We note that the definite article (“the”) is absent in the Hebrew. These opening words would be better translated “In beginning” or “**In [a] beginning**.” We must certainly acknowledge that this is not the absolute beginning, since God Himself existed prior to this beginning. And Job 38:7 indicates that **there existed “sons of God” when the creation took place.**

As a matter of fact, the Bible speaks of a time “**before the eons.**” Unfortunately, nearly all English translations of the Bible translate the Hebrew “olam” and the Greek “aion” as eternal or eternity. In cases where a passage is clearly referring to something that cannot mean eternal, a different word is chosen ... generally “age” or “world.” But this is a very inconsistent approach to translation.

In the New Testament we find a number of variations of the Greek word “aion” ... aion, aions, aion of the aions, aions of the aions, aionian. We must consider the significance of these variations, or we will not see all that God is revealing to us. The fact that “aion” clearly refers to a limited period of time, at least in some cases, should cause us to closely examine all instances where the word is used. We must determine, from context, its meaning in each case. If we examine every instance where these words appear, we will see that **“aion” and “olam” do not refer to an endless period of time**, and should not therefore be translated eternal. Instead, they refer to a period of time with

a beginning and an end. A better translation would be to consistently use “eon” or “age.”

Consider the following instances, where we see that an “aion” in the Greek is a period of time with a beginning and an end, and that the Bible speaks of a number of distinct eons. (Keep in mind that “olam” in the Hebrew Old Testament is equivalent to “aion” in the Greek New Testament.)

“Before the eons” “Before times eonian”	1 Corinthians 2:6-8; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; Titus 1:1-3
“This eon” “The current eon”	Matthew 12:32; Galatians 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:17 and numerous other instances
“The impending eon”	Matthew 12:32; Mark 10:30; Ephesians 1:21; and others
“The oncoming eons” (plural)	Ephesians 2:7
“Conclusion of the eon” (singular)	Matthew 13:39; 13:49; 24:3; 28:20
“Conclusion of the eons” (plural)	Hebrews 9:26

All of the eons (or ages) collectively consist of the period of time on which the Bible is focused. We know little about the time “before the eons,” because the Bible speaks to man about things occurring in this time period referred to as the eons.

And when we read, “In [a] beginning” we read about the beginning of the first age, or eon.

Before we proceed, allow me to say a few words about the **Concordant Version** of the Bible. The Concordant Version is a very literal and consistent translation, and we will refer to it often as we consider exactly what God is revealing to us. Unfortunately other translations, even the Authorized Version (also known as the King James Version – “KJV”), will at times use a single English word to translate several different words in the original languages. While meanings relayed by two different words may, at times, be very similar, combining them into a single English equivalent does not allow us to consider what the distinction might mean. When a translator has determined there is no practical difference, he may use a single English word to translate several different words from the originals. But what if the translator has missed something? What if the translator’s beliefs concerning certain doctrines is wrong? The translation becomes a commentary, representing the beliefs of the translator. If we seek to know precisely what

God has revealed to us, and if we acknowledge that the translators and even the majority within the church **might be wrong** on some points, then we must seek to shed all human bias (as much as is possible) as we strive to study God's word in its purest form.

The Concordant Version seeks to use a different English word for each individual word in the original languages. With word meanings derived by carefully examining every instance where the word occurs, an appropriate English equivalent word is used. Preserving distinctions found in the originals allows the reader to examine the translation carefully for himself.

“GOD” CREATED^{1:1}

The Hebrew word translated “God” in this instance is “**Elohim**.” Here is another example of distinctions made in God's Word that are lost in most English translations. We see the following variations in the Old Testament.

El: 250 times (singular)

Eloah: 58 times (singular)

Elohim: 2200 times (plural)

All of these variations are typically translated “God.” But could there be some significance God is relaying to us as the various forms are used? None of the variations is actually a name for God. Instead, these words are **descriptive** of who God is. They are his **title**. And we must be careful, because **elohim** is sometimes used of men ... it does not always refer to God. It is also interesting that at times these descriptive titles are in the singular (**El** and **Eloah**), but at other times we see the plural (**Elohim**).

El appears to carry the meaning "**subjector**" ... one who subjects others to himself. Most often it refers to God in His function as "The Subjector." Clearly **God's plan is that all of His creation become subjected to Him**.

For He (Christ) must be reigning until He should be placing all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death. For He subjects all under His feet ... Now, whenever all may be subjected to Him, then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all. ^{1 Cor 15:25-28}

Besides seeing in this passage God's role as the Subjector (**El**), we also see the commission of Christ ... to reign until all have become subjected to Him, at which point Christ surrenders the throne and is Himself subjected to God. In this instance Christ performs the function of a "**To-Subjector**," one who is acting to bring others into subjection to God, "The Subjector." **Eloah** is singular, and appears to carry the meaning of a "To-Subjector."

Eloah, then, would seem to make reference to Christ, whose mission is to bring all things into subjection to God. Christ is "*the One completing the all in all.*"^{Eph 1:23}

Note that I have said that **El** **appears** to mean Subjector, and **Eloah** **appears** to mean To-Subjector. There may be differences of opinion here. Some believe there is no practical difference between **El**, **Eloah** or **Elohim** .. and that all are referring to the one and only God. The **fact** is that there are different forms used in the Hebrew. I am presenting a theory that I believe best explains the differences between **El**, **Eloah** and **Elohim** ... but this is my opinion. Let the reader study and pay close attention to the details, and determine for himself precisely what God is revealing to us.

The form **Elohim** is plural and appears to make reference to multiple entities functioning as "**To-Subjectors**." This form appears far more frequently than the other forms. Could this imply that God most often acts by using others to accomplish His objectives?

So **El** is the Subjector of all, accomplishing the subjection by His spirit operating in and thru His Son (**Eloah**) and the subordinate sons (**Elohim**). But God's one spirit operates in them all, which may account for the reason we often see a singular pronoun when referring to the plural **Elohim**.

It may surprise the reader to learn that **elohim**, usually translated "God," **sometimes refers to men** in the Scriptures. In Exodus 21:6; 22:8 and 22:9 the KJV translates **elohim** as "judges," as the context in these instances is clear that the **elohim** are men acting in the capacity of judges. Psalm 82:1 is an interesting study.

*The **Elohim** are stationed in the congregation of **El**.
Within the **Elohim** is He judging. (CV)*

*God standeth in the congregation of the mighty;
he judgeth among the **gods**. (KJV)*

Who is God (**El**) judging here? The KJV has him judging other gods. The Concordant Version sheds light, as we can see the exact form of the Hebrew being used. **El** (The Subjector) is judging the **Elohim** (the To-Subjectors ... men in this instance). Let us read on to verses 2-4.

*Till when are you judging with iniquity?
And are partial to the wicked?" (Interlude)
Deliver the poor and the needy:
From the hand of the wicked rescue them. (CV)*

This sheds more light. The **elohim** (men acting as judges) are standing before **El** (God), as God judges the **elohim**. God charges the **elohim** to judge justly, rescuing the poor and the needy from the hand of the wicked. The Psalm concludes with verses 6-8.

*I, I say, **Elohim** are you.
And sons of the Supreme are you all.
Surely, as a human, you are dying,
And as one of the chiefs are you falling.
Rise, **Elohim!** Judge the earth!
For you, you are allotting among all the nations.(CV)*

By way of contrast, the KJV reports:

*I have said, Ye are gods;
and all of you are children of the most High.
But ye shall die like men,
and fall like one of the princes.
Arise, O God, judge the earth:
for thou shalt inherit all nations.*

What the KJV refers to as "gods" are clearly men ... those upon the earth serving in the capacity of "to-subjectors." The purpose of these "to-subjectors" is to judge justly, and to deliver the poor and the needy from the hand of the wicked.

Even today we know there are some men who have authority to rule over or judge other men. In every age such men have been chosen and empowered by God to in some way fulfill His purposes. As we continue our study of Genesis we ask ... Could a particular line of men have been given

special mention because they were the **elohim** ... the “to-subjectors” of mankind in their day?

With all of this in mind, we remember it was **the Elohim** (the to-subjectors; plural) that **created the heavens and the earth**. This would include **Eloah** (the To-Subjector ... **Christ**), for we read:

... the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him. ^{Col 1:15-17}

Christ existed in the time “before the ages” began, and as the primary “To-Subjector” He was involved in the creation of the heavens and the earth as the first age began. Since **Elohim** is plural (to-subjectors) we ask who besides God (**El**) and Christ (**Eloah**) may have existed prior to the first age, and who may have been used by God as to-subjectors? Were there celestial beings (commonly called “angels”) that were included in the **Elohim** that created the heavens and the earth? While there were no human beings before Adam, there were **sons of elohim** present at the founding of the earth (Job 38:4-7).

The fact is, many details are not revealed to us. But we do know it was the **Elohim** that created the heavens and the earth. And it is suggested that care be taken as we encounter the various forms ... **El, Eloah, Elohim** ... which are commonly translated “God.”

El	Singular	250 times	“Subjector”
Eloah	Singular	58 times	“To-Subjector”
Elohim	Plural	2200 times	“To-Subjectors”

FROM CREATION TO CHAOS^{1:2}

Most Bible translations tell us "the earth **was** without form and void," implying that God created it in this fashion from the start, and then shaped it into its present form. But the Concordant Version, and several other literal translations, report that “the earth **became** a chaos and vacant...”^{1:2} Did God initially create the earth in a condition of chaos? Consider Isaiah 45:18, “*He did not create it a chaos.*”

Arthur C. Custance in "Without Form and Void" (1989 Doorway Publications) presents a thorough analysis of this issue from the linguistics

perspective. After reviewing both sides of the issue and presenting viewpoints from many experts, Custance concludes that the linguistic evidence supports the translation "**became**." A number of other dedicated and respected Bible scholars agree with this position, including E.W. Bullinger and Finis Dake.

The simple form of the verb of existence need not be expressed, and its absence would imply "was." But the presence of the causative form of the verb ("eithe" in the Hebrew) tells us the earth was **caused** to become a chaos and vacant. This is the same as in Genesis 1:3 where the causative verb is also found, and is translated, "**Let there be** light" as opposed to, "The light was."

Peter seems to speak of an original creation prior to the earth's becoming chaos and vacant.

... there were heavens of old, and an earth cohering out of water and through water, by the word of God; through which the then world, being deluged by water, perished.^{2 Peter 3:5-6}

This could possibly refer to the flood in Noah's day, but would the earth prior to that event be described as "heavens of old" and "an earth cohering out of water and through water?" This sounds more like the chaos conditions that existing at the time of Genesis 1:9,

Flow together shall the water from under the heavens to one place, and appear shall the dry land.

Several passages in the New Testament refer to a "**disruption**." (See John 17:24-25; Ephesians 1:3-4; 1 Peter 1:19-21.) In these passages the KJV translates the Greek "katabole" as "foundation" and the NIV renders the word "creation." But "kata" (down) "bole" (casting) does not appear to convey the notion of a foundation. The Greek stem "kata bal" is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament which existed in the days of Jesus) to translate nine different Hebrew words, all having the idea of *cast, breakdown, ruin, etc.* We find the verb form of "katabole" in Hebrews 6:1, "... we should be brought on to maturity, not again **disrupting** the foundation of repentance from dead works." This is a most interesting passage, since both *disruption* and *foundation* are found in the same passage. Here *foundation* comes from the Greek "themelios" (from the root "place-care"), which is clearly different from *disruption*.

The inconsistency of the KJV and NIV is most obvious in 2 Corinthians 4:9 where both translations see "kataballo" as a form of disruption, and not a foundation. Here the KJV reads, "... *cast down*, but not destroyed," and the NIV, "... *struck down*, but not destroyed."

Returning to Genesis 1:2, it appears that **God created, and something happened to prompt a disruption**, causing the earth to **become** a chaos and vacant. We have not been told what of God's created order existed prior to this disruption, or what prompted the disruption. (Remember, the purpose of God's Word is not to tell us everything about every subject, but only that which pertains to mankind in this time period known as the eons.)

This disruption seems to bring the first eon to a close. While the Bible may not always be clear exactly when one eon ends and another begins, it is clear, as previously discussed, that there are a number of different eons. From an examination of all references, I present the following hypothesis to be considered by the reader as we continue our study of the Bible.

Eon #1	Ends with the disruption at Genesis 1:2
Eon #2	Ends with the flood in Noah's day
Eon #3 (Present eon)	Ends with Christ's return to reign upon the earth
Eon #4	Ends with the Great White Throne judgment
Eon #5	Ends at the consummation, when God becomes All in all (see 1 Corinthians 15)

FROM CHAOS TO ORDER^{1:2}

The spirit of the Elohim is "vibrating" over the water's surface, and the Elohim says, "*Become light.*"^{1:2} So begins the work of the Elohim in bringing order and replenishment to what had become chaos and vacant. As God's spirit moves (vibrates) upon the darkened and formless creation, that which He speaks comes to pass.

THE CREATION OF MAN^{1:27}

On the sixth day of creation the Elohim creates humanity (male and female) **in His image**.^{1:27} (At this point only herbage and fruit are mentioned as food for mankind and for animals.^{1:29}) Greater detail concerning the creation of man is provided in Genesis 2.

And forming is Yahweh Elohim the human of soil from the ground,

*and He is blowing into his nostrils the breath of the living,
and becoming is the human a living soul.^{2:7}*

We learn that man's **soul** (the "life," or the consciousness element of man) is formed by a combining of the soil (body) and God's spirit. In Ecclesiastes 12:7 we read that at death the soil (body) returns to the soil and the spirit returns to God Who gave it. When this "dissolution" takes place at death, the soul that was created at the joining of the body and spirit "disappears," or goes to "the unseen" (sheol in the Hebrew ... hades in the Greek). Hades literally means "the unseen."

Recognizing that "the human" (Adam) is alone, Yahweh makes for him "*a helper as his **complement***."^{2:18} Adam would no longer be alone, but he would be incomplete without his complement.

Relative to the **creation of Eve**, the first woman, we note from the Concordant Version that she is formed not from Adam's rib, but from an "angular organ."

And falling is a stupor on the human, caused by Yahweh Elohim, and he is sleeping. And taking is He one of his angular organs and is closing the flesh under it. And Yahweh Elohim is building the angular organ, which He takes from the human, into a woman..."^{2:21}

Prior to this surgery, it appears that Adam possessed both male and female organs. But Yahweh separates His creation into male and female. The "angular organ" is most likely the womb. In 2:24 we see a **model for marriage**.

Therefore a man shall forsake his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they two become one flesh.^{2:24}

God had taken man and created woman from out of him. Woman was man's complement ... necessary for man to be complete. The two together make a completed "one flesh."

As a side note, Adam and Eve became one flesh ... that is, they were married. Yet no minister performed a ceremony to marry them. Nowhere in Scripture do we see an example of a preacher or minister performing a marriage. There are some passages that make reference to a marriage

ceremony or feast, but details are based upon the rules within a culture, and the Bible is silent as to these details. But from this Genesis account we see that marriage ... the bringing together of a man and a woman to become one flesh ... is in accordance with the plan of God.

GOD CEASES^{2:3}

After finishing His work on the sixth day, Yahweh ceases from all His work on the seventh day. He **hallows the seventh day**, which simply means He “sets it apart” or distinguishes it from the other days. While this hallowing of the seventh day, and ceasing from His work, might be a picture of the Sabbath He would later command Israel to observe, the Sabbath is not yet a commanded observance.

As we continue our study, let us take careful note when something is deemed to be “holy” or “hallowed.” We note here that something (in this case a day) becomes holy simply because God deems it to be so. One day is not better than the others days, but God has simply **deemed it to be holy**, thereby setting it apart or distinguishing it from the other days.

“YAHWEH”

Throughout Genesis 1 we see references to God through His title; Elohim. For the first time in Genesis 2:4 we see the designation **Yahweh Elohim**. Whereas the title Elohim denotes God’s function as “Subjector,” Yahweh is His name that **denotes existence**. It could be literally construed “Will – be – ing – was” ... noting God’s existence in the future, the present and the past.

Keep in mind that when God gives a name it is not arbitrary or insignificant. The name has meaning, and it typically describes the character of a thing. Throughout the Old Testament when we are provided with a name, it is often followed by the reason the name was given. Names are given with purpose. So also with the name of God; Yahweh. His name denotes His existence ... past, present and future. This sets Him apart from man whose only existence is in the present.

In the original Hebrew, Yahweh is actually **YHWH** since there are no vowels. **YHWH** was referred to as the tetragrammaton (tetra = four and grammaton = letter). Since the Israelites believed God’s name was too holy to be mentioned, they placed below the name “vowel points” for the word Lord (“Adonai” in the Hebrew). Vowel points are markings or punctuation that assist with pronunciation, since there were no vowels in the original Hebrew

writings. By placing these vowel points below the text, they were not actually changing the text itself ... and this would be a reminder to any who are reading the text to pronounce “Adonai” instead of “Yahweh” since God’s name was too holy to enunciate. Much later, those unfamiliar with the use of the vowel points in this manner simply incorporated the vowels for Adonai into **YHWH**, resulting in Yehowah, pronounced **Jehovah**. Therefore when we see the name Jehovah in some writings or Bible translations it is referring to Yahweh in the text.

WHO IS YAHWEH? (VARIOUS THEORIES)

We discussed the fact that the Hebrew word typically translated “God” appeared in different forms. And we presented the theory that El refers to God the Supreme Subjector, Eloah refers to the Son of God (the agent acting to bring mankind into subjection to God), and Elohim refers to multiple agents acting to bring mankind into subjection to God. Elohim might include, at times, the Son of God. And at times the Elohim are men. Remember that Elohim is plural, whereas El and Eloah are in the singular.

Could the expression **Yahweh Elohim**, then, designate Yahweh, one of the Elohim? We know that Elohim is plural, and at times Elohim refers to multiple entities (sometimes men) acting as To-Subjectors. Therefore when we see Yahweh Elohim, could this be a way of telling us this is Yahweh, one of the Elohim ... as contrasted with others who may be Elohim?

Another theory I have encountered is that when El, Eloah or Elohim are used to describe God ... they are always referring to the Son of God, prior to the time He became manifested as Jesus Christ. The Son of God was spoken into existence in Genesis 1:3 when we read, “Let there be light.” From this point on, and throughout the Old Testament, all Israel knows is the Son (Yahweh ... later to appear visibly as Jesus Christ). The fact that there is an invisible God the Father is unknown throughout the Old Testament period. **It is not until the appearance of Jesus in the New Testament that God the Father is revealed.**

So Yahweh (later Christ) is **a** God ... and the only God known by Israel ... but He is not **the** God later revealed in the New Testament. Consider, relative to this theory, the following:

God (El) judgeth the righteous (plural)^{Psalm 7:10}

And He (Yahweh) shall judge the world...^{Psalm 9:8}

*For neither is the Father judging anyone, but has given
all judging to the Son...*^{John 5:22}

Therefore since it is the Son who judges, and not God the Father, then the passages from the Psalms referring to El and to Yahweh must be referring to the Son.

Of course those that adhere to the **Trinitarian theory** believe there is no difference between God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son, as both are a part of the same “Godhead.” Those holding to this position believe that there is no significant difference between El, Eloah and Elohim; and it would not matter if Yahweh referred to the Father or the Son, since both are “the God.”

The Trinitarian theory is the most widely accepted in Christianity today, ever since the “official church” in the fifth century accepted it as indisputable truth. Alternative theories were stamped out, often by force. The churches of our day use similar tactics to silence any who might challenge what is deemed to be orthodoxy (the official position of the church on various issues). While not going so far as to burn at the stake those who may challenge orthodoxy (as was done in the past), other means of persecution are often used ... typically expulsion from a congregation so the voice of the challenger might not “contaminate” others within the congregation. I say all of this simply to point out that we must be willing to hear and discuss theories other than our own, seeking to come to a better understanding of what God has revealed. If not, and if we simply enforce a single theory ... insisting that no other perspective contains any possible element of truth ... we run the risk of becoming locked into error.

Orthodoxy has the traditional church locked in error, because individuals are prevented from challenging certain theories deemed to be indisputable truth by the early church councils. The most horrendous of these doctrines is that of eternal torment (hell) which is considered to be a keystone doctrine of orthodoxy, but which is not supported by the Bible itself. Here is an example of God’s character being blasphemed, and many people caused to reject the Christian faith, simply because the traditional church is locked in error because it refuses to allow serious discussions and study on this subject. Many an earnest student of the Bible has been asked to leave churches of all affiliations because the doctrine of eternal torment is questioned.

Returning to the doctrine of the Trinity, **we should all seek to simply believe what the Bible (God's Word) tells us.** If others within the Body of Christ present differing theories based upon their studies, let us hear them out and seek to discuss these differences of opinion in a civil manner, with the goal of mutually developing a clearer understanding of what God has revealed. No single person is so correct on every point that he should turn his back on other possibilities of interpretation as presented by his brothers and sisters in Christ.

I wish to make the reader aware of one final theory concerning Yahweh of the Old Testament, referred to as **Modalism.** The belief is that Jesus Christ the Son, and God the Father, are one in the same, but only manifested in different “modes” at different times. This is different from the Trinitarian position in that the holy spirit is not seen as a separate entity, and the Trinitarian would also reject the notion of God appearing in different “modes” at different times.

All of these various theories find apparent support in certain passages of Scripture. And any must admit there is an element of mystery concerning Elohim and Yahweh as revealed in the Old Testament. I simply present these various theories to the reader to be considered, as we seek through our studies to determine what God has revealed to us about Himself in His Word. Let us keep these things in mind as we encounter El, Eloah, Elohim and Yahweh in our study of the Old Testament.

While we may be unclear, at times, about El, Eloah, Elohim and Yahweh, we remember that the purpose of the Bible is not to tell us every detail concerning every matter. God has chosen to reveal to us those things He has determined to be important for us to know, and He has chosen not to reveal every detail on other matters. But whether it be El, Eloah, Elohim or Yahweh who is speaking ... that which is spoken has ultimately come from God, and we should take heed.

Let us seek to listen to what God is telling us in His word and **believe,** as best we can understand exactly what He is telling us. And let us learn to consider theories other than our own as we study the Scriptures, seeking to help one another within the Body of Christ to gain better understanding.

THE ERA OF INNOCENCE^{2:8}

Adam and Eve now live **in the garden of Eden** where they have been “**placed**” by Yahweh Elohim^{2:8} and where they are to “**keep**” the garden.^{2:15} They are permitted to eat from any tree with the single exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.^{2:17} Even the tree of the living^{2:9} is permitted. Perpetual life would therefore be sustained indefinitely by eating from the tree of the living.

Prevented from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve are not familiar with evil but only with the goodness Yahweh has placed all around them. They are naked, yet there is no guilt or shame.^{2:25} They are totally dependent upon Yahweh. Adam and Eve are as little children with no knowledge of evil, but who are entirely cared for by their loving father.

This is a **time of innocence**.

As noted previously, the Bible seems to speak of certain periods of time with a beginning and an end ... eons or ages (from the Greek “aion”). As we closely look at Scripture we also see that God deals with mankind progressively thru the ages, in what we might call “**administrations**” (similar to what we refer to as a “Presidential administration,” recognizing there are changes as we transition from one President to another). As we study we should look for differences in the way in which God is dealing with mankind.

THE END OF INNOCENCE^{3:1}

As Adam and Eve live in innocence, under the full protection and care of Yahweh Elohim, all appears to be perfect. But in the midst of this perfection we note that the serpent is found within the garden. Yahweh allows the serpent to reside there, and to tempt Eve. All is perfect, but not quite perfectly perfect with the presence of evil within the garden ... an evil capable of destroying the innocent existence of Adam and Eve.

After succumbing to the serpent’s temptation and disobeying Yahweh, Adam and Eve possess the knowledge of good and evil, and they realize for the first time that they are naked.^{3:7}

Innocence is gone.

Perhaps the presence of evil serves a purpose as God works to fully reconcile all of His creation to a state even greater than that which was experienced by Adam and Eve. The Book of Revelation records the restoration of man to Eden (New Jerusalem) where he once again eats from the tree of life "*which is for the cure of the nations.*"^{Rev 22:2} But the revelation given to Paul tells of something far greater ... incorruption and immortality, when God becomes All in all.^{1 Cor 15}

Let us consider for a moment the **penalty for disobedience**. Yahweh had previously warned Adam of the consequence if he were to eat from the only forbidden tree, saying

... in the day you eat from it, to die shall you be dying.^{2:17}

The KJV for 2:17 is, "*for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" This misleading translation has caused Bible students to "spiritualize" the consequences of disobedience. Since Adam clearly did not die on the day of his disobedience, it is reasoned that the penalty must refer to a spiritual death, and not a literal death. But when translated properly the consequences for disobedience make perfect sense. On the day of disobedience, the process of dying (**mortality**) that will lead to death began, since Adam and Eve were from that day prevented from eating of the tree of life that would have sustained them and prevented death. The act of disobedience did not result in a spiritual death in hell, as many teach today ... but instead in a mortal, dying condition, leading ultimately to death. This is consistent with what Paul would later write...

Even as through one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned...^{Rom 5:12}

We did not inherit from Adam a sinful condition ... we inherited death (mortality) which leads to our propensity to sin. True, a part of the consequence for sin would be a separation from God when expelled from the garden, so in this sense there is a spiritual consequence. But this separation is not eternal. It will last only until God **restores** or **reconciles** mankind to Himself. So we have, in the consequence of disobedience, both death (mortality) and a separation from God. Throughout the remainder of the Bible we will see God working with mankind on both of these fronts.

There is more to the consequences of disobedience.

... cursed shall be the ground when you serve it, for your sakes. In grief shall you eat of it all the days of your lives. And thorns and weeds shall it sprout for you, and you shall eat the herbage of the field. In the sweat of your face shall you eat your bread, till your return to the ground, for from it are you taken, for soil you are, and to soil are you returning.^{3:17-19}

Once cared for by Yahweh, Adam and Eve will now experience difficulties in daily living. And again we see the death penalty ... not fulfilled on the day of disobedience, but over time (mortality) ... **“till you return to the ground.”**

Adam and Eve are driven from the garden, so as not to have access any longer to the tree of the living.^{3:24} We also see that their disobedience has caused the **first recorded death of an animal**, in order to clothe them.^{3:21}

Let us now consider ... **where is hell, the fiery torment that is a major doctrine in the church today?** Most churches teach that the one dying in unbelief will spend eternity in hell, tormented forever and ever. But the consequence for sin that was introduced by God from the time of man's first rebellion was, *“to die shall you be dying.”* In other words, the consequence for sin is mortality ... the state of dying that leads ultimately to death. And death is simply a “dissolution” of the components of life. The body returns to the ground from whence it came, the spirit returns to God Who gave it, and the soul (life) is gone ... “unseen” (sheol in Hebrew, and hades in Greek). There is no immortality, unless God chooses to provide that at some future time. Only God Himself is immortal.^{1 Timothy 6:16} As for any future state we may hope for beyond this present life, we are totally dependent upon Him. (But do not lose heart. God's gracious solution for all of mankind is revealed later in His Word.)

If the consequence for disobedience was eternal torment, would that not have been made clear to Adam and Eve from the start?

THE ERA OF CONSCIENCE^{4:1}

Now having a knowledge of good and evil, mankind begins a new era, or “administration.” No longer under Yahweh's direct care and living in innocence, man is now **guided by his conscience**. He has nothing else to guide him at this point. We see this when Adam and Eve **know that they are naked** (for the first time), and they cover their nakedness without

receiving any guidance from God.^{3:7} It was their conscience (based on their knowledge of good and evil) that enabled them to recognize their nakedness, and that caused them to take action.

Cain's offering is the **first recorded offering** to Yahweh.^{4:3} We have not been told that Yahweh asked for or required an offering, as would later be the case. This appears to be a voluntary act.

Not long thereafter, we witness the first **murder**. Cain kills Abel,^{4:8} but Yahweh protects him from being killed by would-be avengers.^{4:15} Cain would be forced to become a wanderer, and the ground would not continue to "give its vigor" as it apparently had before this time.^{4:12} These are the consequences of Cain's actions. In killing Abel, Cain was driven by **jealousy** when Abel's offering was preferred by Yahweh.

When Adam and Eve were driven from the garden, it appears that they still had access to Yahweh's presence. But when Cain murders, he is **forced to leave Yahweh's presence** and relocates to Nod, east of Eden.^{4:16}

Man begins to grow in number, populating the earth. Cain's descendents multiply,^{4:17} as do Seth's.^{5:1} When Enosh "*calls on the name of Yahweh*" we see the **first recorded prayer**. (Prayer would not have been necessary for those who had lived directly in Yahweh's presence.) The genealogy from Adam to Noah displays that **man had a long life-span**.^{5:1}

Adam	930 years
Seth	912 years
Enosh	905 years
Cainan	910 years
Malaleel	895 years
Jared	962 years
Enoch	365 years (Did not die, but walked with God)
Methusalah	969 years
Lamech	753 years
Noah	950 years (See Genesis 9:29)

Humanity begins to be **multitudinous**^{6:1} but at the same time **evil grows**. We read that the "*sons of the elohim*" take wives from the "*daughters of the human*."^{6:2} Immediately thereafter we read that Yahweh Elohim declares: "*His days will be 120 years*."^{6:3} The shortest span of life noted in Seth's line before this time is 753 years (not counting Enoch whose death is

not recorded). This **shortening of man's lifetime** appears to be a direct response to the growing evil within man.

Before moving on, let us pause to consider this passage concerning the **sons of the elohim and the daughters of the human**.^{6:2} In this context it appears that the "sons of the elohim" may have been a particular line of men God had chosen to be His "To-Subjectors" ... leaders among men chosen for the purpose of bringing other men into subjection to God. (Remember our previous consideration of the word elohim). The practice of these men marrying others outside of the line, thereby "diluting" the authority of the sons of the elohim, is what appears to be objectionable to God. Another possibility is that the elohim in this case are referring to celestial beings ... commonly called "angels" ... who have interacted with man. Jude 1:6 refers to "*messengers who keep not their own sovereignty, but leave their own habitation ...*" This could refer to angels intermarrying with humans, although the Jude reference does not note exactly how these beings have left "their own habitation." Since elohim can refer to celestial beings or humans, then, we cannot be definitive in our interpretation of this Genesis 6 passage. It would seem, though, that the most likely meaning is that the sons of the elohim are a special class of men, appointed by God as elohim.

Yahweh sees that "**much is the evil of humanity in the earth, and every form of the devices of its heart is but evil all its days**."^{6:5} He plans to wipe mankind off the surface of the ground,^{6:7} yet **Noah finds grace** in the eyes of Yahweh.^{6:8} Elohim has a purpose for Noah, which is why ... despite the evil within the human heart ... He gives grace to Noah. (We will see that even after all humanity is destroyed in the flood and only Noah's family remains, there is still evil in the heart of man. So Noah and his family do not **deserve** or **earn** the grace that God gives them. Evil resides in their hearts too.)

We will find as we read on that God's purpose is to preserve humanity, and ultimately to reconcile all of humanity to Himself. He begins that process by showing **grace** to Noah.

THE FLOOD^{6:1}

The **earth had been "ruined"** by man and "**filled with wrong**."^{6:11} Yahweh tells Noah, "*The era of the end of all human flesh is come before Me...*"^{6:13} Yahweh instructs Noah to make an ark as He prepares to flood the earth to kill all living things.^{6:17} He establishes a covenant with Noah to preserve life of all kinds ... and Noah obeys.^{6:22}

As for the ark, Noah is told to “*shelter it from the inside and from the outside with a sheltering coat.*”^{6:14} This “shelter” and “sheltering coat” are translated “pitch” in the KJV, and come from “kphr” in the Hebrew. This same word is later used of the cover (shelter) over the ark of the covenant,^{Exod 25:17} a sheltering for Jacob to find favor from Esau by giving gifts,^{Gen 32:20} and a covering for sin.^{Exod 29:33,36}

When the waters subside, Noah’s first reported act upon leaving the ark is to build an altar to Yahweh Elohim where he offers up **ascent offerings** of the clean beasts and flyers.^{8:20} Note that this is well **before the law, when specific types of sacrifices were commanded by God.** How did Noah know that his sacrifices were pleasing to God? It could be that God had communicated this to Noah, but this communication is not included in God’s revelation to us. Or it could be that Noah’s sacrifice was an act wholly initiated by him to give thanks to God for His provision. But we see nothing thus far in Scripture commanding men to make specific kinds of sacrifices.

We note that even after the flood, with only Noah and his descendents preserved, Yahweh observes, “*The form of the human heart is evil from its youth.*”^{8:21} We have a problem! **Man’s wickedness has not been eliminated with the flood.**

THE PRESENT EON^{9:1}

As noted earlier, while Scripture speaks of several distinct eons (periods of time), we are not told exactly when one eon ceases and another begins. But it appears that with the flood we move to a new eon ... the eon later referred to as “the present wicked eon,”^{Gal 1:4} and the eon that Jesus says will one day come to an end.^{Matt 24:3}

Now **man is told to be fruitful and to fill the earth.**^{9:1} Shem, Ham and Japheth are the sons of Noah, “*And from these the entire earth is scattered over.*”^{9:19}

Originally man had been given the plants and the fruit of the trees to eat.^{1:29} Now we see that all **animals may be eaten.**^{9:3} This appears to signal a new administration ... or new rules of conduct for man.

Genesis 9:4 seems to equate “**soul**” with “**blood**” ... “*Only flesh with its soul, its blood, you shall not eat.*” We remember that the soul is generated when the soil (body) is joined with the spirit (breath of God). The soul is the “life” of the human ... the consciousness. When we consider the function of the

blood ... carrying the life-sustaining oxygen through the body ... we can see the relationship between the blood and the soul. If the blood is drained from the body, sensation and life are drained away.

We have seen an era of innocence (where man's conduct is governed directly by God, and where man is totally dependent upon God) and an era of conscience (where man is governed by his conscience). We now see a change in how man's conduct is governed, with the advent of an **era of government**. Nations organize and wield authority, governing the affairs of men. In the lineages of Japheth, Ham and Shem we see references made to nations and kingdoms.^{10:5; 10:10; 10:20; 10:31} We also note another change. In the past we saw that Cain, a murderer, was protected by Yahweh from would-be avengers.^{4:15} Now we see that one who sheds the blood of a human would have his own blood shed.^{9:6}

God remains the same. But we are seeing that the manner in which God interacts with mankind, and the rules He establishes for mankind, may change from time to time as God deems appropriate.

BABEL ... GOD SCATTERS MAN^{11:1}

Now coming is the entire earth to be of one lip, all of one speech. And coming is it in their journey from the east, that they are finding a valley in the land of Shinar, and dwelling there are they. And saying are they, each man to his associate, 'Prithee! Let us mold bricks and burn them with a burning.' And coming is the brick to be their stone, and asphalt becomes their mortar. And saying are they, 'Prithee! Build will we for ourselves a city and a tower with its head in the heavens, and make for ourselves a name, lest we are scattering over the surface of the entire earth.'^{11:1-4}

We remember that Yahweh's command to mankind was to be fruitful and to fill the entire earth. But at Babel man builds a city and a tower so as not to be scattered over the entire earth. So Yahweh confuses man's tongue, thwarts man's plan, and scatters man. **Man's plan was directly opposed to Yahweh's plan**. Yahweh said to **scatter** over the earth. Man desires to become entrenched so as **not to be scattered**. So Yahweh "disintegrates" their common language and, "Scattering them is Yahweh thence on the surface of the entire earth."^{11:8}

The genealogy from Shem to Abram^{11:10} reveals a gradual **shortening of lifespan**, as compared with the genealogy from Adam to Noah in Genesis

5:1. We remember in Genesis 6:3 that man's days would be 120 years, though the shortest lifespan we saw in Seth's line was 753 years. But now...

Shem	600 years
Arphaxad	538 years
Cainan	460 years
Shelach	460 years
Eber	404 years
Peleg	339 years
Reu	339 years
Serug	330 years
Nahor	208 years
Terah	205 years
Abram	175 years (See Genesis 25:7)

ABRAM ... THE ERA OF PROMISE^{12:1}

Yahweh now chooses one man, Abram, and tells him to go to a new land. And Yahweh promises to make Abram into a great nation, to bless him and make his name great, to cause Abram to become a blessing, to bless those who bless Abram and to curse those who make light of him.^{12:2} And most significant ... "***And blest in you and in your seed are all the families of the ground.***"^{12:3} In other words, Abram and his seed have been chosen by God to be an **instrument** thru which all families are to be blessed. God does not select Abram just to benefit he and his family ... but **to benefit all families.**

With Abram being singled out, and with the promises made to him by Yahweh, we transition from God working with humanity thru governments ... to God working with humanity thru one man (Abram) and the promises He makes to Abram. The governments of man will still play a role, but God now turns His attention to one man ... Abram.

We observe here Yahweh's intent ... **not to destroy man** who is evil, but **to bless all the families of the ground.** He does this by choosing one man to work thru (Abram) and the seed that would come from Abram (Christ). Yahweh makes two additional promises ... to give all the land Abram sees to him and to his seed for the eon,^{12:7;13:15} and to make Abram's seed as numerous as the soil of the land.^{13:16}

At this point there are no conditions on Abram's part. Yahweh's promises are unconditional, and not dependent upon obedience on the part of Abram.

When famine comes, Abram journeys to Egypt.^{12:10} He **fears Pharaoh, and tells him that Sarai is his sister**. Abram feared he would be killed, but if this had happened Yahweh's promise would not have been fulfilled. Did Abram not believe Yahweh? Here we see that Abram's faith was not perfect, and he saw the need at times to take matters into his own hands rather than to trust that Yahweh would act.

Lot is captured and taken away in a war among the kings of the land. Abram and those dedicated to him (numbering 318) recover Lot, and restore all the goods of Sodom.^{14:16} Melchizedek, king of Salem, blesses Abram (he is a "priest for the El Supreme") and Abram gives a tithe to Melchizedek. Abram refuses to take any of Sodom's possessions as his portion, lest the king might claim: "*I enrich Abraham.*"^{14:23} Here we see Abram's heart, desiring that Yahweh receive full credit for the rescue of Lot.

The giving of the **tithe to Melchizedek**, priest of the El Supreme, occurred prior to the Law where the tithe was mandatory. This appears to be a voluntary offering made by Abram, and a "type" or picture of the tithe that was to come under the Law. Or perhaps the giving of a tithe was customary in Abram's day, and later in the Law God "sets apart" that custom when He incorporates the tithe into the Law.

We note that Abram is referred to as a **Hebrew**,^{14:13} the first use of this term. Yahweh promises Abram descendants as numerous as the stars,

*And Abram **believes in Yahweh Elohim, and reckoning it is He to him for righteousness.***^{15:6}

The significance of Abram's belief would later come to light in Romans 4:1. Here Paul notes that a worker is not "reckoned" his wages; they are owed to him. Abram was not working to **earn** righteousness ... his faith (belief) was "**reckoned**" by Yahweh Elohim for righteousness.

Yahweh tells Abram that while his seed would receive the promised land, they **would suffer in a land not their own (Egypt)** for 400 years^{15:13} until Yahweh judged that nation (Egypt), at which time the people would come out with great goods. The boundaries of the promised land are described to Abram more specifically.^{15:18}

At Sarai's suggestion, and knowing that Yahweh had promised many descendents, Abram fathers a child by Hagar, Sarai's maid. Yahweh's messenger tells Hagar,

*I am increasing your seed, and not shall it be numbered for multitude ... You are to call his name **Ishmael** ... Becoming is he a wild ass of a human, his hand against all, and the hand of all against him.*^{16:10-12}

We will later see that Isaac is Abram's child of the promise, while Ishmael is Abram's child of the flesh. The two will continually be at enmity with one another.

Yahweh describes Himself to Abram as "**the El-Who-Suffices**."^{17:1} Abram needed to learn this, as we have seen his tendency to take action as if El needed his help.

Having believed God's word that he would have many descendents, Yahweh tells Abram his **name would be changed to Abraham** ... because he would become the forefather of many nations and kings,^{17:5} and the land of Canaan would be given to Abraham and his seed for an eonian holding.^{17:5-8}

Yahweh then makes a covenant with Abraham ... the **covenant of circumcision**. Every male was required to be circumcised as **a sign** of the covenant.^{17:9} The one not circumcised was "*cut off from his people*," as the covenant "*he annuls*."^{17:14} Whereas in the past when Abram was promised the land and no conditions were attached to that promise, here we see there is **a condition for individuals to enjoy the promise** of the land ... circumcision.

The Elohim tells Abraham that Sarah will bear a son, to be named **Isaac**. Elohim's covenant would pass to Isaac and his seed.^{17:19} Ishmael would be fruitful, begetting twelve princes and becoming a great nation ... but Yahweh's covenant would be with Isaac.^{17:21} Again we see that there is a place for nations and governments, but God is now working thru a single man and his seed.

Due to their "exceedingly heavy" sin, **Yahweh destroys Sodom and Gomorrah** and all the cities of the basin ... saving only Lot and his daughters.^{18:20} From Lot and his daughters will descend the Moabites and the Ammonites.^{19:37}

Abraham journeys to Gerar and **tells Abimelech** (king of Gerar) **that Sarah is his sister**. Yahweh steps in and prevents Abimelech from sinning, since Abimelech acted with sincerity of heart.^{20:6}

Despite Abraham believing Yahweh and having it reckoned as righteousness, there were times that he also exhibited doubt. He took matters into his own hands to father Ishmael before Isaac was born. Here he deceives Abimelech because he fears him. **Could it be that Abraham BELIEVED Yahweh, but he did not fully UNDERSTAND how Yahweh would act in carrying out His plans?** Abraham was quick to act, feeling that he needed to play a part in bringing about Yahweh's promise, instead of waiting upon Yahweh to fulfill His promise. But even this flaw will play a part in God's overall plan. **We will find that man has a will and can make decisions based upon that will, but nothing he does can derail God's will, as God leads man to the place He wants man to be.**

Abraham prays to the Elohim^{20:17} on behalf of Abimelech and his people, and the Elohim heals them. Here is another early occurrence of prayer. We see that at times the Elohim is physically present with Abraham and he can speak directly to the Elohim. But at other times, as we see here, Abraham prays to the Elohim.

ISAAC^{21:1}

Isaac is born. As a child Isaac is nearly sacrificed by Abraham as he seeks to obey Yahweh. Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son displayed his fear of the Elohim.^{22:12} Following this episode, **Yahweh repeats His promise to Abraham that in his seed all nations will be blessed.**^{22:18} This time, though, the promise includes, "*inasmuch as you hearken to My voice.*" So is there a condition Abraham must fulfill to receive the promise, or is the promise unconditional (as it appeared in previous references)? Could it be that Abraham was chosen because God knew his heart, and knew that Abraham would believe and hearken to His voice? Whatever the case, the **fact** that all nations will be blessed is not dependent upon the obedience or faith of the nations. **It will happen** because of the promise made to one man ... Abraham.

When Abraham commissions his servant to find a wife for Isaac, **the servant prays** for success in his mission.^{24:12} This is another of the earliest cases where an individual prays to Yahweh. Abraham had spoken directly to Yahweh, but here the servant prays to Yahweh, Who is not physically present

with him. Later the servant acknowledges that Yahweh had guided him on his mission.^{24:27}

Following Abraham's death, the **Elohim blesses Isaac**.^{25:11} Isaac's wife, Rebecca, becomes pregnant with twin boys, Jacob and Esau. Yahweh tells her that two nations were within her, and the greater (older) would serve the inferior (younger).^{25:23} Yahweh reiterates his promise to Isaac to give the land, to carry out the oath that had been sworn to Abraham, and to increase his seed as the stars of the heavens.^{26:3-4} And once again we hear,

*Blessed, in your seed, are all the nations of the earth,
inasmuch as hearken did Abraham, your father, to My
voice and kept My charge, My instructions, My statutes,
and My laws.*^{26:4-5}

Again we see the promise that **all the nations of the earth are blessed**. And we see it is due to Abraham's faith (which led to Abraham's obedience), and not anything Isaac did. So the promise passes from one man (Abraham) to another (Isaac). But again, God's purpose is not just to choose or reward one man. This chosen man and his seed will be **the instrument thru which God will bless all nations**.

When Isaac encounters Abimelech, he (like his father) **tells Abimelech that Rebecca is his sister**.^{26:7} He does this because of his fear of Abimelech, for Yahweh later assures Isaac, "***you must not fear, for with you am I.***"^{26:24} Again we see that despite Yahweh's promises, Isaac (like his father before him) had doubts as to the sufficiency of Yahweh.

JACOB^{27:1}

Jacob receives the blessing from Isaac, having deceived his father into thinking he was Esau.^{27:27} Jacob would be master over his brothers, and people would serve him.^{27:29} We recall that Jacob had previously tricked Esau into selling his birthright.^{25:33} Of course this trickery was unnecessary, since Yahweh had already promised, before Jacob's birth, that he would be greater than his brother. Again we see man (Jacob) acting as if necessary to implement God's plan, rather than waiting upon God to fulfill His plan.

Yahweh promises to Jacob the land, and that his seed will be numerous as the soil of the land. And once again we read that **in Jacob and his seed, all families are blessed**.^{28:14} So the torch has now passed from Abraham to Isaac, and now to Jacob ... for the purpose of blessing all families.

Jacob marries Leah^{29:23} and Rachel^{29:28}, and has the following children.

Reuben (Leah)^{29:32}
 Simeon (Leah)^{29:33}
 Levi (Leah)^{29:34}
 Judah (Leah)^{29:35}
 Dan (Billhah, Rachel's maid)^{30:5}
 Naphtali (Billhah)^{30:7}
 Gad (Zilpah, Leah's maid)^{30:11}
 Ashur (Zilpah)^{30:13}
 Issachar (Leah)^{30:18}
 Zebulon (Leah)^{30:19}
 Dinah (Leah)^{30:21}
 Joseph (Rachel)^{30:23}
 Benjamin (Rachel)^{35:18}

Jacob deceives Laban to gain possession of the flocks,^{30:37} even though God had promised to give him the flocks.^{31:12} Jacob did acquire many cattle, herds, maids, servants, camels and asses,^{30:43} but he also earned the enmity of Laban and his sons. When Jacob returns to his brother Esau, he fears Esau and devises a plan to earn his favor.^{32:1-23} Yet again the Elohim assures Jacob of his blessing.^{32:24-32}

Time and again Jacob is fearful and takes matters into his own hands, despite the promises of Yahweh. Still, **Jacob is renamed Israel**,^{35:10} and is instructed by the Elohim to be fruitful and to increase. Israel is promised that a nation and an assembly of nations will come from him, kings will descend from him, and the land is given to Israel and his seed.

JOSEPH^{37:1}

Joseph's life is marked by a series of troubles. He is sold as a slave to the Ishmaelites by his brothers,^{37:28} taken to Egypt, and sold to Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh.^{37:36} **But Yahweh is with Joseph and causes him to prosper.**^{39:2}

Since Yahweh's presence with Joseph is obvious, and as all that Joseph does causes him to prosper, Joseph is made supervisor over his lord's household.^{39:4} But he is framed by Potiphar's wife and imprisoned.^{39:20} **But Yahweh comes to be with Joseph, and gives him grace in the eyes of the chief of the prison.**^{39:21}

Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream, foretelling of seven good years followed by seven years of famine.^{41:29} Because of this, **Pharaoh places Joseph over all of Egypt.**^{41:41}

Two sons are born to Joseph ... Manasseh and Ephraim.^{41:51} As famine effects the land of Canaan, Jacob sends his sons to Egypt to buy food ... of which Joseph is in charge.^{42:3} Joseph makes himself known to his brothers^{45:1} and tells them not to grieve of their actions against him. As a matter of fact, Joseph does not credit his brothers at all for what has happened to him, but observes that **the Elohim sent him to Egypt to preserve life.**^{45:5-8}

Yahweh tells Jacob to go down to Egypt, promising to accompany him, and to cause his family to become a great nation, and then to bring him up out of Egypt.^{46:4} So Jacob takes his entire family to Egypt.^{46:2} At this time the house of Jacob consists of seventy five souls.^{46:27} Pharaoh tells Joseph to have his family dwell in the best of the land ... Goshen.^{47:6} **In Goshen they are fruitful, and increase greatly in number.**^{47:27}

JUDAH^{49:8}

As Jacob nears the end of his life, he blesses each of his sons and speaks words of prophecy to each. To Judah he says:

Judah, you your brothers will acclaim. Your hands shall be on the scruff of your enemies. Prostrate to you shall the sons of your father. The whelp of a lion is Judah... Not withdraw shall the sceptre from Judah, nor a statue-maker's staff from between his feet, till it be that ease shall come to him. And to it shall the expectation of the peoples be.^{49:8-10}

We see in this a prophecy that from Judah would arise a great kingdom. This would be partially fulfilled by David and Solomon, and completed in Christ, the "expectation of the peoples."

JACOB'S DEATH

After Jacob dies, Joseph's brothers fear that he will repay them for what they had done to Joseph. But Joseph assures them,

*You must not fear, for under Elohim am I. And you, **you devised against me evil, yet the Elohim devises it for me for good,** that it may work out as at this day, to preserve*

alive many people.^{50:20}

Who was at work in Joseph's life? Was it his brothers, devising evil against him? Or was it Yahweh, devising good thru Joseph? **Here we see a meeting of the will and actions of man, and the will and actions of God.** And despite the evil that is within man's heart, **GOD'S WILL IS ACCOMPLISHED.** In this case many people were preserved alive thru the sequence of events that took place.

THE "ISRAELITES"

In Genesis we have seen God working thru certain individuals He had chosen, with the ultimate purpose of blessing all families and nations. Beginning with Abraham, God subsequently chose Isaac, and then Jacob who was later renamed Israel. In Exodus 9:7 we will see the children of Israel referred to as the "Israelites" – and as they grow in number we see them throughout the Old Testament not as a family, but as a nation. For the remainder of the Old Testament, and even in the New Testament prior to the revelation given to Paul, God's plan is to bless all families of the earth, working thru His chosen instrument, the Israelites.

This overview contains the thoughts and opinions of the author, and is considered by the author to be a work in progress and subject to change as his study of the Scriptures continues. Some things that God has revealed are very clear. The gospel, for example ... that Christ died for our sins ... that He was entombed ... and that He was roused!^{1 Cor 15:3} ... this is very plain. That all are to be ultimately reconciled to God thru the work of Christ is also very plain.^{1 Cor 15:20-28} But on many specifics in the Scriptures there are a variety of interpretations and opinions, and none should conclude they have the complete and final understanding on these matters that are less clear. The reader is encouraged to consider various opinions, but to study and to think for himself. Within the Body of Christ we should study and discuss our various understandings so as to reach a more complete understanding of that which God has revealed.

*Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament and the Concordant Version of the Old Testament.
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