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Introduction, Location Of Land Of Uz, God's Judgments By King Nebuchadnezzar, Edom Ammon And Moab, Genealogies Of Uz, Mount Seir Esau And Edom, Are Edom And Land Of Uz Synonymous?, Time Frame Of Book Of Job, Geographic Perspective Of Writer Of The Book Of Job, Genealogy And Location Of Sabeans, Abraham's Bitter Sons, Scope Of Land Promised To Abraham, Nature Of The Jew, Jewish Arab Family Feud, Was Job An Israelite?, Chaldean Bandits, Sojourn Of Terah Abraham And Lot, TransJordan Spice Route, Eliphaz the Temanite, Cities Named After Sons, Did Job Possibly Live During The Same Time As Esau?, Edom And Idumea

Recently, someone wrote to me concerning something I had mentioned in an article I wrote about six years ago; that is, "Satan: Origin, Purpose And Future". In that article, I noted that some people believe that the story of Job, and thus the Book of Job, is older than the Book of Genesis. This person was wondering what my source was for this piece of information. As I explained to him, being as I heard, or possibly read, this information so long ago, at this current time, I can't really remember its source. But, in order to not disappoint this person, and to provide him with the best answer possible, I decided to do a bit of Biblical research, and following is what I discovered:

In the Book of Job, in the very first verse in the very first chapter, we are told that the Patriarch Job lived in the land of Uz, as we see here:

"There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil." Job 1:1, KJV

I reasoned that if we could determine the location of the land of Uz, we might possibly gain a better understanding of the time frame in which the Book of Job was written. As you will see by the following verses, in warning of the Lord's coming judgments by the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, the Prophet Jeremiah begins with Jerusalem and Judah, and then expands outward, beginning with the nations and cities which immediately bordered Judah, until he includes the entire known world of the Middle East, as well as the eastern area of the Mediterranean region, and the northeastern sector of Africa. All of this was to be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar:

"Behold, I will send and take all the families of the north, saith the LORD, and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and against all these nations round about, and will utterly destroy them, and make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations. Moreover I will take from them the voice of mirth, and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom, and the

voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones, and the light of the candle. And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations. And I will bring upon that land all my words which I have pronounced against it, even all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah hath prophesied against all the nations. For many nations and great kings shall serve themselves of them also: and I will recompense them according to their deeds, and according to the works of their own hands. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel unto me; Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and be moved, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them. Then took I the cup at the LORD'S hand, and made all the nations to drink, unto whom the LORD had sent me: To wit, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof, and the princes thereof, to make them a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse; as it is this day; Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; And all the mingled people, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines, and Ashkelon, and Azzah, and Ekron, and the remnant of Ashdod, Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon, And all the kings of Tyrus, and all the kings of Zidon, and the kings of the isles which are beyond the sea, Dedan, and Tema, and Buz, and all that are in the utmost corners, And all the kings of Arabia, and all the kings of the mingled people that dwell in the desert, And all the kings of Zimri, and all the kings of Elam, and all the kings of the Medes, And all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another, and all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth: and the king of Sheshach shall drink after them." Jeremiah 25:9-26, KJV

"Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked."
Lamentations 4:21, KJV

As I explained a moment ago, in the previous verses, after mentioning Jerusalem and Judah, Jeremiah then works his way outwards, and includes the coastal towns and cities of the Philistines, (which today corresponds to the Gaza Strip and the Mediterranean coast of Israel), as well as Tyrus and Zidon, (which today correspond to cities in modern Lebanon), and Arabia, (today known as Saudi Arabia due to the Saud dynasty being in power), and Elam and the land of the Medes, (which roughly corresponds to the Caspian Sea region near the northwestern corner of modern Iran), and Egypt.

But what I want to call to your attention is the fact that the Prophet Jeremiah mentions the kings of the land of Uz, as well as Edom, Ammon and Moab, and then states in his Lamentations that the daughter of Edom dwells in the land of Uz. That word "daughter", which is derived from the Hebrew "bath", isn't always used in a literal sense. Sometimes it is used as a personification, or to represent daughter

villages. As I point out in other articles, such as in "The Woman In The Wilderness And The 144,000", the three ancient nations of Edom, Ammon and Moab roughly correspond to the modern nation of Jordan. Edom was located in the mountainous region to the south/southeast of Judah and the Dead Sea; therefore, this must have also been the land of Uz, being as the Lord says through Jeremiah, that the daughter of Edom dwells in the land of Uz.

The next question is to determine exactly who Uz was. Upon looking at the genealogies of Genesis and the first Book of Chronicles, we discover that there were apparently several men by the name of Uz, pronounced "oots". The first of these was one of the sons of Aram. Aram was the son of Shem, who was one of the three sons of the Patriarch Noah, as we see here:

"Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash." Genesis 10:21-23, KJV

"The sons of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram, and Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Meshech." 1 Chronicles 1:17, KJV

The second Uz mentioned in the Bible, who was also known as Huz, was the first son of Nahor, who was brother of the Patriarch Abraham, as we see by the following verses:

"And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram," Genesis 22:20-21, KJV

Please note that the Aram mentioned in the previous verses is not the same Aram mentioned earlier as the grandson of Shem. This Aram was the father of the Aramean people; that is, the Syrians. You may recall that in the article "The Children Of God And Politics", I mention that Abraham left his father, Terah, in Padanaram, a region of Syria, in order to travel southwestward, and claim God's promises in the land of Canaan.

The third Uz we find mentioned in the Bible was the son of Dishan. Dishan was a descendant of Seir, whose offspring inhabited Mount Seir prior to the arrival of Esau. The Bible does not make Seir's ancestral line very clear. In reading chapter one of the first book of Chronicles, it appears that Seir may possibly have been a descendant of Abraham through his second wife Keturah, or else he may have been related to Ishmael, who was Abraham's son by his Egyptian handmaiden, Hagar. In fact, because of the way the verses are ordered in that chapter, there is even a possibility that Seir may have been a grandson of Esau. Whatever the case may be, Seir was the father of Lotan, who in turn had a son named Hori. Hori in turn fathered Dishan, who then had Uz. These descendants of Seir became known as the Horites, which just so happens to mean "cave dweller". Following are some verses from the

books of Genesis and 1 Chronicles which confirm these facts:

"These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. And the children of Anah were these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. The children of Ezer are these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan. The children of Dishan are these; Uz, and Aran. These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir. And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." Genesis 36:20-31, KJV

"And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness." Genesis 14:6, KJV

"The sons of Ezer; Bilhan, and Zavan, and Jakan. The sons of Dishan; Uz, and Aran." 1 Chronicles 1:42, KJV

While we cannot determine with one hundred per cent certainty after which Uz the land of Uz received its name, one point which does become evident, is that all three of these men lived prior to the time of Moses by at least several hundred years, or earlier.

Being as the Prophet Jeremiah does tell us that Edom dwelt in the land of Uz, I strongly suspect, but can't conclusively prove, that this area of land may have been named after the final Uz; that is, the son of Dishan. My reasoning behind this speculation is rather simple. As you will already know, Jacob and Esau were the two sons of Isaac and Rebekah, which would make them the grandsons of the Patriarch Abraham. All of these genealogies are fully explained in my article "The Children Of God And Politics". The Bible makes very plain that the Lord gave Esau Mount Seir for an inheritance. Esau was later known as Edom, and thus his descendants became known as the Edomites. Thus the land of the Horites, or the land of Uz if you prefer, became the land of Edom; exactly as the Prophet Jeremiah states above. Following again are a few verses which substantiate these points:

"And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom. And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir:" Genesis 36:6-9, KJV

"Then we turned, and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea, as the LORD spake unto me: and we compassed mount Seir many days. And the LORD spake unto me, saying, Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward. And command thou the people, saying, Ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau, which dwell in Seir; and they shall be afraid of you: take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore: Meddle not with them; for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a foot breadth; because I have given mount Seir unto Esau for a possession." Deuteronomy 2:1-5, KJV

"And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau: and I gave unto Esau mount Seir, to possess it; but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt." Joshua 24:2-4, KJV

As I said a moment ago, the previous verses seem to offer some convincing proof that the land of Uz, and the land of Edom, which included Mount Seir, may be one and the same. At the very least, it seems that the land of Uz became a part of Edom, the inheritance of Esau.

But, this still does not solve our problem regarding trying to determine which book came first, Job or Genesis. Why? Because so far, we don't have a clue regarding at what time in Biblical history Job and his family lived in the land of Uz; thus, it is difficult to say with exactitude, when the events in the Book of Job took place. Obviously, the events must have taken place after the land became known as the land of Uz. If Edom is in fact the land of Uz spoken of in the Book of Job as I suspect, then we have a time period spanning from the days of Esau, all the way to about twelve hundred years into the future to the time of Jeremiah.

To further complicate this issue, there arises the slight possibility that there may have been more than one place known as the land of Uz; after all, there are three men by the name of Uz mentioned in the Bible. If we take this point into consideration, this stretches our time period back even further to the time of the Patriarch Shem, when the first Uz is mentioned. But, for the sake of simplicity, let's assume that there was only one place referred to as the land of Uz; that is, Edom.

Well, being the Biblical investigator that I tend to be, I wasn't about to stop my research here, so I decided to look into a few other clues found in the Book of Job. The first thing that came to my mind is the fact that the writer of the Book of Job refers to the place as the land of Uz. Is this possibly a clue that Job and his family lived there before Esau's descendants took it over, and it became known as Edom? Possibly so, but not necessarily, being as Jeremiah likewise referred to Edom as the land of Uz.

In the third verse of the very first chapter of the Book of Job, there is a small hint which suggests that the writer may be talking about Edom, when he speaks of the land of Uz. This verse states:

"His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east."

Job 1:3, KJV

Please notice that Job is associated with the men of the east. Logic dictates that the writer may have been writing from the perspective of one who lived in the land of Israel, and Edom, or the land of Uz, was most certainly just to the southeast of the Judah/Dead Sea region, as we have already seen. Of course, this doesn't exclude the possibility that Job and his family may have lived even further east than Edom.

We are given another clue regarding the location of the land of Uz in verse fifteen of the very same chapter, which says"

"And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Job 1:15, KJV

According to my Hebrew lexicon, the Sabeans were the descendants of Sheba. As with Uz, the Bible mentions three men by the name of Sheba. The first was the son of Joktan, who was the son of Eber. Eber, (the father of the Hebrews), was the grandson of Arphaxad, who was the son of Shem, one of Noah's three sons. In other words, their genealogy looks like this:

Noah
Shem
Arphaxad
Salah
Eber
Joktan
Sheba

The second Sheba we find mentioned in the Bible was the son of Raamah, who was the grandson of Cush. Cush was the son of Ham, (also a son of Noah), which would make Cush another one of Noah's grandsons.

The third Sheba we see mentioned in the Scriptures, was the son of Jokshan. Jokshan was one of Abraham's sons by his wife Keturah. The Hebrew lexicon also states that Sheba was a nation in southern Arabia. The geographical location of this nation would seem to add weight to the idea that the land of Uz was Edom; and thus the Sabeans could have easily come up from the south in order to attack and steal Job's flocks.

Similar to the Midianites, (who were also descendants of Abraham by his second wife Keturah), who sold Jacob's son Joseph in Egypt, apparently, the Sabeans also dealt in human

slave trade; because in the Book of Joel, where the Lord is prophesying against those who have divided up the land of Israel, and sold the children of Israel into slavery, we are also told:

"The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head: And I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the children of Judah, and they shall sell them to the Sabeans, to a people far off: for the LORD hath spoken it." Joel 3:6-8, KJV

While it is only speculation on my part, I suspect that the Sabeans were descendants of this third Sheba; that is, the son of Abraham by Keturah. From the information I've shared with you thus far, it is easy to see that the nations which were descended from Abraham through Hagar's son Ishmael, through Keturah's sons, and through Esau's sons, seem to have settled for the most part in this same general area, which now constitutes modern Jordan and Saudi Arabia. The fact that Abraham chose Isaac above all of these other sons, according to God's promise, and then Isaac blessed Jacob above Esau, would obviously leave bitterness and resentment in the hearts of some of his other sons, who were sent away, as we see here:

"Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country." Genesis 25:1-6, KJV

Please notice that Abraham sent his other sons "unto the east country". This phrase is referring to the land which was located to the east of the Jordan River, which was the geographical boundary of the land which God had promised to Abraham. The Euphrates River, which originates in Armenia, and runs through Syria, was the northern boundary. It was not the part of the Euphrates which runs through modern-day Iraq, as some Jews, and even certain misguided Christians, have claimed. God never promised Abraham land extending all the way over to Iraq. That is a modern Jewish deception. If the truth be told, they are trying to get much more than what God originally promised them; but that has always been their nature; and it has gotten them into trouble time and time again down through history. As I have pointed out before, this is why they have been kicked out of country after country for millennia. They are simply never content unless they control everything; beginning with a country's financial purse. Some may view that as being anti-Semitic, but it is simple historical fact which anyone can verify.

But getting back to our main point, what were we told about

Job? The writer of the Book of Job states that he "was the greatest of all the men of the east". So here again is another strong indication that the story of Job's struggles with his enemies may have taken place in Edom and the surrounding region which now comprises Jordan and Saudi Arabia. Job apparently settled there, and so did the other half of Abraham's family, who ultimately became loosely known as the Arabs.

While initially, the Lord told Moses and the Israelites to leave these nations alone when they passed by them on their way to the Promised Land, we discover later in the Bible, that all of these nations turned against, and fought against the Israelites; so much so that the Lord pronounced certain judgments against all of them. You will find all of these prophecies in the books of the Old Testament. Having said that, it is easy to understand why these nations would even engage in selling the Israelites as slaves when they caught them; and this family feud between the Israelites and the Arab nations has continued to this day, as I also point out in "The Children Of God And Politics". If Job was a wealthy Israelite living in the land of Edom, it also makes it easier to understand why the minute the Lord lifted His Hand of protection from Job, his enemies came in and either stole, killed or destroyed all that he possessed.

You may question why I speculate that Job was an Israelite. Well, as I noted earlier, the Book of Job appears to have been written from the perspective of one who was living in Israel; and this is why the writer refers to the land east of the Jordan River as "the east country". Furthermore, if we consider the main thrust of the story, it is about the sufferings of a man who considered himself righteous before God. Now, it seems to me that the theoretical Jewish writer of the Book of Job would not consider any of his enemies to the east to be righteous; but such a person would certainly seem to argue that a fellow Jew living in that region would be righteous before God. That is my personal reasoning.

Returning to the Book of Job, in verse seventeen of chapter one, we find yet another clue regarding the geographical location of the land of Uz. This verse states:

"While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee." Job 1:17, KJV

First poor Job was attacked by the Sabeans coming up from the south, and now we are told that he is attacked by the Chaldeans as well. As I point out in other articles, the Bible tells us that the Chaldeans, who were also known as the Chaldees, dwelt in the area of Mesopotamia, which in our modern day comprises southern Iraq, where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers meet to form the Shatt-al-Arab river. The Shatt-al-Arab then empties into the Persian Gulf. As you may recall, the Scriptures tell us that Terah took his family and left Ur of the Chaldees, in order to sojourn to the land of Canaan, as we see here:

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there." Genesis 11:27-31, KJV

At any rate, it seems that perhaps there were some marauding bands of Chaldeans who apparently made it their occupation to travel through Arabia, and attack the caravans which travelled the famous spice trade route which stretched from Arabia to Damascus, and passed through Edom, or the land of Uz. Perhaps it was Job's strategic location there which allowed him to become so rich, with the blessings of God, of course.

In looking for additional clues regarding the location of the land of Uz, I next considered the origin of Job's three friends. We are told that when Job lost everything and became afflicted by the Lord's Design, his wealthy friends from the surrounding area, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite came to visit and console him in his troubles, as we read here:

"Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place; Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him." Job 2:11, KJV

First, we have Eliphaz the Temanite. In looking at the ancestry of Teman, and the location of the land of Teman, we quickly discover that it fits perfectly into my theory concerning the land of Uz being located in, or a part of Edom. The Bible tells us that Teman was a grandson of Esau through his father Eliphaz, (Esau's first son), and a duke of Edom, as we see here:

"These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah." Genesis 36:10-16, KJV

It is interesting to note that there are no other men by the

name of Eliphaz mentioned in the entire Old Testament. This leads me to assume that Job's friend Eliphaz may very well have been Esau's son Eliphaz. The fact that he is referred to as the Temanite is really not confusing if we consider the possibility that Eliphaz may have simply chosen to honor his son by naming the land in which they dwelt after him. This was a common practice in those days. For example, we know that Hamor named the city of Shechem after his son of the same name. Cain too, after he had fled from the face of the Lord, named his city after his son Enoch, as we see in the Book of Genesis:

"And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch." Genesis 4:17, KJV

If there is any validity to my speculation regarding Eliphaz the Temanite actually being the son of Esau, then with this piece of information, we have also acquired a specific time frame regarding when the events described in the Book of Job may have taken place. In other words, it would seem that the story of Job may have taken place during the same time as the stories of Jacob and Esau, and their immediate families.

To further substantiate this possibility, consider the fact that according to the Hebrew lexicon, the land of Teman was located to the east/southeast of Idumea, that is, Edom. Idumea is merely another name for Edom, which, as we have already seen, was the inheritance of Esau. So once again, we see that all of these events center around the same general region; that is, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, right next to the border with Israel. Abraham kicked out all of his other sons and gave the inheritance to Isaac, and so his sons settled nearby. In fact, they settled right on the other side of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. They settled "in the east country".

As we continue our discussion in part two, we will take a look at the possible genealogies of Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. In addition to this, we will also learn of the origin of the ancient nations of Moab and Ammon. I will then offer some closing remarks concerning everything we have been discussing here. I trust that you will join me.

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Bildad The Shuhite, Genealogy Of Shuah, Job And Rich Friends
Three Shuah's, Zophar the Naamathite, Naamah And Inheritance
Of Judah, Naamah - Daughter Of Lamech, Naamah - Ammonite Wife
Of King Solomon, History Of Moab And Ammon, Final Conclusions

Having now discovered the ancestry of Eliphaz the Temanite, let's take a brief look at Job's second friend, Bildad the Shuhite. According to the Hebrew lexicon, and as confirmed by the Bible, Bildad is the only person in the Old Testament who is assigned this descriptive name. The appellative "Shuhite" is derived from the name "Shuah", which signifies wealth. Exactly who was Shuah? Again, we see another piece of our puzzle falling perfectly into place. He was another one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah, who, as we have already seen, settled to the east of Israel after Abraham sent them on their way, so that Isaac could receive the inheritance. Here again are the verses I shared earlier:

"Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country."

Genesis 25:1-6, KJV

The fact that Shuah means "wealth" is also interesting, as it further adds to our picture of Job being a wealthy man, blessed by the Lord, who was surrounded by wealthy friends, as he lived his leisurely life in the land situated to the east of Israel; that is, in the land of Uz, or Edom. Job's wealthy friends coming to visit him when the Lord began to test him, reminds me of the old adage "birds of a feather, flock together". Due to their rich status, they apparently had enough free time on their hands to sit around and share their personal philosophies with poor Job, who argued his personal righteousness before God and his friends. As I briefly mentioned earlier, my suspicion is that the reason why Job and his friends may have settled in that area, is because the famous spice trade route passed right through there, and they were simply wise enough to take advantage of that fact, and became rich as a result of it. This is not Biblical fact, but merely a personal speculation on my part.

The Bible does mention two other men by the name of Shuah. The first of these was a Canaanite whose daughter became the wife of Judah. She bore Judah two sons: Er and Onan. The other Shuah was a distant descendant of Judah by quite a few

generations. Given the time frame which we are discussing here, the first Shuah, that is, the father of Judah's wife, may possibly have been the ancestor of Bildad the Shuhite, but personally, I tend to think that Shuah, Abraham's son by Keturah, better fits into all of the other evidence we have already discovered; but, I could be wrong. I think the last Shuah, that is the descendant of Judah, lived too far into the future to really fit into our story. So again, the idea of Abraham's other sons settling to the east of the Jordan River in what is now the two countries of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and becoming rich there, seems to offer considerable support for my theory concerning where and when the story of Job took place.

Finally, let's see what we can discover about Job's third friend; that is, Zophar the Naamathite. Considering the fact that Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite lived in this region, apparently not very far from where Job resided, it seemed relatively safe to assume that Zophar did as well. The Hebrew lexicon states that a Naamathite was a person from the land or city of Naamah; but it also adds that the exact location of that place is unknown. However, this isn't quite a dead end. Not satisfied with that answer, I got out my trusty little Scriptural shovel and started digging away; and what I discovered, buried in the Book of Joshua, is the following information:

Following the Israelites' conquest of Canaan, in determining the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, we are informed that their jurisdiction stretched as far as certain cities and villages which the Bible describes as "the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah toward the coast of Edom southward". That word "coast" actually means "border". In other words, the furthest extreme of the territory which was claimed by the tribe of Judah, included a string of cities which possibly ran parallel to the western border of Edom and to points southward. Included in the long list of distant cities found in Joshua chapter fifteen, is a place called Naamah. Bingo!

Again, this fact fits in perfectly with the picture we have been developing concerning the location of the land of Uz, where Job lived, and the surrounding region where his fellow rich friends lived. So if the land of Uz is Edom as it seems to be, then what we see is that Zophar the Naamathite would have come from Naamah in the west to join Job; Eliphaz would have come from the east/southeast in Teman to join Job, and Bildad the Shuhite may have possibly resided in Edom itself. This point is a bit blurry, because we are not exactly sure where Shuah's descendants settled "in the east country". I am assuming that it is Edom itself. Even if it isn't, we know that Bildad must have lived rather close to Job in that same general region.

Concerning the origin of the word Naamah, the Bible mentions two people who had this name. The first of these was the daughter of Lamech by his wife Zillah. This is not the same Lamech who fathered Noah, but rather the great, great, great grandson of Cain. Naamah's brother was Tubal-cain in the days before the Flood. The second Naamah mentioned in the Bible was the Ammonite wife of King Solomon, and the mother

of Rehoboam. As you will recall, Rehoboam was the foolish son of Solomon who snubbed the wise counsel of the Elders of Israel; and it was during his reign, that the Lord divided David's kingdom into north and south; that is, Judah and Samaria; or Ephraim, as Samaria was also known.

The fact that Naamah was an Ammonite woman adds one other possibility to our equation; and that is that there may have also been a city or village in Ammon by the name of Naamah as well, but I found no Scriptural evidence to support this view. As I have already pointed out, Edom, Ammon and Moab were the three ancient nations which roughly correspond to modern Jordan. If such a place did exist in Ammon, then it is possible that Zophar the Naamathite could have been from there as well. In either case, it still puts him relatively close to Job in Edom, except he would have been to the north of Job, instead of to the west of him. Personally, I prefer to accept the first possibility, being as the town of Naamah is specifically mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

Incidentally, as I point out in a few of my other articles, Ammon and Moab were populated by the descendants of Moab and his half-brother Benammi, who were the sons born to the two daughters of Lot, who was Abraham's nephew. Very briefly, following the fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot and his two daughters were forced to flee to a cave in the mountains. Lot was getting old, and his two daughters were concerned that they might be left without children, being as they had no husbands. So, after getting Lot their father drunk, they engaged in sex with him; which resulted in the birth of Moab and Benammi. Following is the story taken from the Book of Genesis:

"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day." Genesis 19:29-38, KJV

Returning to our main topic of discussion, looking at all of

these various Biblical hints and clues as a whole, in my opinion, it seems then that there is quite a bit of evidence which suggests that the events described in the Book of Job may have occurred in this very same region, most probably in Edom, (or the land of Uz, as it was also known), and that they may have occurred during the same time that Jacob and Esau and their immediate families were alive. So, to answer the question regarding which is older, the Book of Job, or the Book of Genesis, it seems fit to me to respond in the following manner:

If we consider the actual events described in each of these two books, then obviously, Genesis is older in a strictly chronological sense, being as it describes Creation itself. But, if on the other hand, we are questioning which of the two books was actually written first, my conclusion at this current time would be that it is simply too difficult to say with any degree of certainty; at least for me.

While the events described in the Book of Job occurred after the story of Creation, based on the evidence I have provided here, they do appear to have occurred at the same time as the stories of Jacob and Esau and their families. This would in fact place Job's story at least a few hundred years prior to the time when Moses was born.

So the key question which arises is this: Was the Book of Job really written prior to the time of Moses, or was it written considerably later after-the-fact? Obviously, if Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, (or five books of the Law), as it is commonly believed, then it would stand to reason that Genesis must have been written after-the-fact, because Moses certainly was not an actual witness to the Creation Event. Is it possible then, that the Book of Job may also have been written some time after the actual events had occurred? I honestly do not know. I am not a trained scholar. Neither do I have access to any parchment fragments; and even if I did, I do not possess the scientific background required to make such a qualified determination.

Regardless of what the answers might be to these questions, I for one have found this study to be quite interesting and enjoyable. It always excites me to go digging through the Scriptures, searching for these facts like hidden jewels. I hope that you have enjoyed it as well, and that you have learned a few new things along the way. I know that I have. Until the next time!

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