



## Lesson 2: Patriarchs and Camels



### PROFILE-EASTON ILLUSTRATED DICTIONARY

Till the age of seventy, Abram sojourned among his kindred in his native country of Chaldea. He then, with his father and his family and household, quitted the city of Ur, in which he had hitherto dwelt, and went some 300 miles north to Haran, where he abode fifteen years. The cause of his migration was a call from God (Acts 7:2-4). There is no mention of this first call in the Old Testament; it is implied, however, in Gen 12. While they tarried at Haran, Terah died at the age of 205 years. Abram now received a second and more definite call, accompanied by a promise from God (Gen 12:1, 2); whereupon he took his departure, taking his nephew Lot with him, "not knowing whither he went" (Heb 11:8). He trusted implicitly to the guidance of Him who had called him.

Abram now, with a large household of probably a thousand souls, entered on a migratory life, and dwelt in tents. Passing along the valley of the Jabbok, in the land of Canaan, he formed his first encampment at Shemchem (Gen 12:6), in the vale or oak-grove of Moreh, between Ebal on the north and Gerizim on the south. Here he received the great promise. He removed his tent to the mountain district between Bethel, then called Luz, and Ai, towns about two miles apart, where he built an altar to "Jehovah." He again moved into the southern tract of Palestine, called by the Hebrews the Negeb; and was at length, on account of a famine, compelled to go down into Egypt. He returned from Egypt to near Bethel. Here disputes arose between Lot's shepherds and those of Abram about water and pasturage. He then removed to the plain or "oak-grove" of Mamre, which is in Hebron. He finally settled here, pitching his tent under a famous oak or terebinth tree, called "the oak of Mamre" (Gen 13:18). This was his third resting-place in the land.

# ABRAHAM

PATRIARCH

### WHEN IN TIME

Archaeological Periods Levant	Chronological Date	Historical Events	Biblical Historical Event	Bible Periods
Neolithic & Chalcolithic	8500-3150 BC			Creation & Fall & Flood
Early Bronze I	3150-2850 BC	Early Dynastic Period in Egypt (ca. 2900BC Menes)		Patriarchs
Early Bronze Age II	2850-2650 BC			Patriarchs
Early Bronze Age III	2650-2200 BC	Egyptian Old Kingdom Dynasty III to VI		Patriarchs
Early Bronze Age IV	2200-2000 BC		Abraham b ~2166 BC Departs Ur 2091 Isaac b 2066 Esau & Jacob b ~2006 BC	Patriarchs
Middle Bronze Age I	2000-1550 BC	Egyptian Middle Kingdom (2050-1640 BC) Dynasty XI to XIII Hyksos Egyptian Dynasty (~1663-1555 BC)	Joseph b 1915 BC Jacob & Family enter Egypt ~1876 BC	Patriarchs
Middle Bronze Age II	1550-1400 BC	Egyptian New Kingdom (1539-1070 BC) Dynasty XVIII -XX	Moses Born 1526 BC	Patriarchs
Late Bronze Age I	1550-1400 BC		Exodus 1446 BC Conquest 1406- BC	Exodus/Conquest
Late Bronze Age II	1400-1200 BC	Amarna Period ~1386-1334 BC		Judges

### WHERE

Trace Abraham's Journey from Ur, to Haran, to Canaan, Egypt and back to Canaan



**CALL of ABRAHAM: Genesis 11:27 to 12:6**

Abraham (Abram) is called out of Ur of the Chaldeans to the Land of Canaan.

From the bible passage what archaeology remains might give us further insight into the passage?

Mark what you expected to be added to Bible by archaeology?

<b>Archaeology can add to Bible Event:</b>	
Build confidence in general trustworthiness, historical nature and reliability of Bible	
Confirm events described in Bible	
Clarify/Correct/Provide Understanding about our assumptions and conclusions about the past	
Complement or Enhance our knowledge of events, customs and people	
Prove a given event or people mentioned in the Bible	

**ABRAHAM in Egypt: Genesis 12:7-13:1,18**

Abraham (Abram) goes down to Egypt to escape a famine in Canaan.

From the bible passage what archaeology remains might give us further insight into the passage?

Mark what you expected to be added to Bible by archaeology?

<b>Archaeology can add to Bible Event:</b>	
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**Lot and Destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah: Genesis 19**

Lot and his family escape from Sodom.

From the bible passage what archaeology remains might give us further insight into the passage?

Mark what you expected to be added to Bible by archaeology?

<b>Archaeology can add to Bible Event:</b>	
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A question raised is that Abraham had camels (Gen 12:16) which according to archaeologist was not domesticated unto 900's BC(?). How might this concern be addressed or what would be helpful to better understand this verse?

## Beginnings of Israel

Genesis 1- man-made. What is more important is that it provides a modern day Christian with comfort in knowing that we are not alone in our struggles. These great characters were human beings just like us and faced similar struggles; sometimes successfully and sometimes not. There is no doubt why the Holy Spirit has recorded them.

BIBLE PERIOD	MAIN ACTORS	MAIN ACTION
<b>PATRIARCHAL Genesis 12-50, Job</b>	<b><u>Four Great Men in Genesis &amp; Job</u></b>	
<b>2165 to 1804 B.C.</b>	<b><u>Abraham</u>, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Leah, <u>Isaac</u>, <u>Jacob</u>, <u>Joseph</u>, <u>Job</u></b>	Beginning of Hebrew Nation Giving of Abrahamic Covenant Jews Move into Egypt God Allows Satan to Test Job

### Genesis 12-25 - The story of Abraham

God tells Abraham to get away from his country and family to a land he would be showed and three promises were made. The reminder of these chapters has us reading of his journey to the promised land then to Egypt, and His return. With the return comes the promise of a son from Sarah and Abraham, and the test of his faith by God's command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice.

### Genesis 21 -27 – The story of Isaac

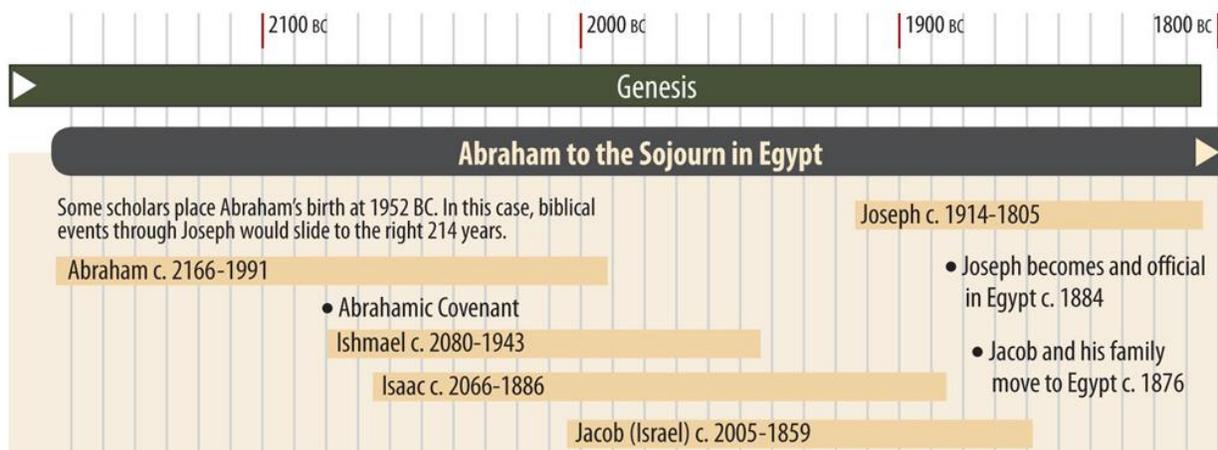
The promised son marries Rebekah and they have twins (Esau and Jacob). Isaac loves the first and Rebekah loves the second. By trickery Jacob takes the blessings and birth right from Esau.

### Genesis 27-36 – The story of Jacob

Jacob flees from Esau to his mother's people where he is tricked by his uncle into working for Him for 14 years for Leah and Rachel before he returns to the promised land. Jacob has 12 children who will become the twelve tribes of Israel. He loves the two children by Rachel, Joseph and Benjamin. This favoritism leads to his children tricking him into believing Joseph was killed when he had been sold into slavery in Egypt.

### Genesis 37-50 – The story of Joseph

Joseph, the son of Rachel who was loved by Isaac is a dreamer (sees visions) and hated by his brothers. They sell him into slavery in Egypt where he goes from slave to prisoner to second in the land. By God's use of Joseph's life the rest of his family of 70 people are saved from a famine in the land and are settled in Egypt where they will exit as a great nation about 400 years later.





**Digging Deeper into Bible and Archaeology** – The following material is provided as reference material or as a deeper discussion and is optional for preparation for the class.

**Genesis 12:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> He treated Abram well for her sake. He had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

**Genesis 24:10-11 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup> Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods *were in* his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.

<sup>11</sup> And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time when women go out to draw *water*.

Camels play a major role in the Biblical narrative of the patriarchs; the animals are mentioned 23 times in Genesis alone. Camels were among the gifts the Pharaoh gave to Abraham (Abram). Later, when it was time to procure a wife for Isaac, Abraham's servant took 10 camels for that journey to Mesopotamia. These texts take for granted that the camels, (Hebrew word *gemalim*) used by the patriarchs were domesticated. In fact, the camel, appears fifty-four times in the Old Testament, is mentioned prominently in the accounts of Abraham (Gen 12:16), Isaac (Gen 24:10), and Jacob (Gen 31:34).

The late domestication of the camel has been argued by scholars for the last 60 years. A cited reason for this late date is that there are no indicators for the camel in Pharaonic Egypt (Midant-Reynes 1977). Among the otherwise exhaustive inventory of animal life depicted in Egyptian tomb paintings, not a single representation of a camel can be catalogued. Some archaeologists in 2014 suggest that camels were not domesticated in Israel until the end of the 10th century B.C. (earlier work put the domestication of the camel before 1200 BC). This would place Israel's first domesticated dromedaries during the period of the United Monarchy, centuries after the Genesis narratives. If true, this would suggest that "this anachronism is direct proof that the text was compiled well after the events it describes." A widely alleged anachronism used in support of the idea that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible (a theory known as the Documentary Hypothesis) since the accounts include the early patriarchs possessing camels. The theories range from as late as the 9th century BC to as early as the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC, depending on the availability of data, interpretation of data, and personal opinions, leaving a large range of years in dispute.

And yet, extensive evidence for at least sporadic use of camels has been found in texts, pictures, and seals in which camels are depicted in domesticated situations well before this time. Let's look at some of the evidence:

- The earliest evidence comes from a pottery camel's head and a terra cotta tablet with men riding on and leading camels. According to Free, these are both from predynastic Egypt (1944, pp. 189-190), which according to Clayton is roughly before 3150 B.C.
- Free also listed three clay camel heads and a limestone vessel in the form of camel lying down—all dated at the First Dynasty of Egypt (3050-2890 B.C.).
- Also from Egypt include a limestone container, missing the lid, in the shape of a lying dromedary carrying a burden from a First Dynasty tomb at Abusir el-Meleq, <sup>28</sup> and a terra cotta tablet with a depiction of men riding and leading camels, dated to the Pre-Dynastic period, about Ointment jar in the shape of a sitting dromedary, Abusir-EI Melek, 2820-2650 B.C.

- A picture of a camel being ridden by a human is depicted in the ruins of Tall Halaf in Iraq, dating back to the 2900's B.C.
- a fishing site located on the tiny island of Umm an-Nar off the Abu Dhabi coast (Frifelt 1975). At this site, dated to 2700 BCE, Frifelt assembled a collection of approximately 200 camel bones. She also unearthed a limestone stela depicting a one-humped camel. Certain aspects of this assemblage, such as a relatively high percentage of bones from juvenile animals, may reflect an early stage of domestication
- The key site is Shahr-i Sokhta, located in Iran's Sistan desert and occupied from 3,200 BCE until 1,800 BCE. The levels dated 2,700–2,400 BCE produced a handful of camel bones, a clay pot filled with camel dung, and a piece of fabric woven from sheep/goat and camel hair (Compagnoni and Tosi 1978). This collection of finds offers the earliest evidence for the domestication of the Bactrian camel.
- At Hieraconpolis, some 250 miles south of Cairo, a fragment originally regarded as a donkey, and also of early dynastic date, has in recent years been interpreted as a camels head. Third dynasty (2700-2615 B.C.) or late fourth dynasty (2616-2500 B.C.)
- The oldest evidence of camel domestication is from Yemen dating back to 2700's B.C.
- A most convincing find in support of the early domestication of camels in Egypt is a rope made of camel's hair found in the Fayum (an oasis area southwest of modern-day Cairo). The two-strand twist of hair, measuring a little over three feet long, was found in the late 1920s. It appears that it might have been used to hold together a miner's garment. It was sent to the Natural History Museum where it was analyzed and compared to the hair of several different animals. After considerable testing, it was determined to be camel hair, dated (by analyzing the layer in which it was found) to the Third or Fourth Egyptian Dynasty (2686-2498 B.C.).
- In a gypsum quarry, under half a meter of gypsum powder, a string made of camel's hair was found. Pottery from the same layer was dated to the third or early fourth dynasty (about 2640-2500 B.C.). The string had presumably been used by a miner to keep his clothing together.
- He then mentioned several models of camels from the Fourth Dynasty (2613-2498 B.C.)
- Lexical evidence for the camel (*am.si.harran*; roughly translated in Sumerian as "humped quadruped that goes by the road [i.e., caravan]") exists by the Sumerian Early Dynastic Period (c. 2400 B.C.E.) in a list of animals from the Sumerian city of Shuruppak.
- In a house at Mari, a camel burial (c. 2400-2200 B.C.) was discovered within a house. Ancient people often buried their animals, and this could hardly be explained away as a wild camel wandering into a home and subsequently buried by the occupants.
- A rock inscription in hieratic (a type of Egyptian script) found near Aswan has an accompanying petroglyph of a man leading a dromedary camel. It is thought to date to the Sixth Dynasty (c. 2345-c. 2181 B.C.; Ripinsky, p. 139).
- From the territory of Bactria-Margiana near present-day northern Afghanistan (late 3<sup>rd</sup> to early 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium) comes a copper alloy figurine of a camel equipped with a harness, now housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- The *am.si.harran* are found in a Sumerian love song from Nippur, also dated to the 18th century B.C.E. (from an Old Babylonian copy of a third millennium B.C.E. original), which states "the milk of the camel is sweet." This seems to allude to some domestication of the animal.
- Text from the ancient city of Ugarit mentions the camel "in a list of domesticated animals during the Old Babylonian period (1950-1600)", suggesting that it, too, was domesticated
- Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions on a rock face in the Wadi Nasi (1900 to 1500 BC)
- A grain distribution list concerning a royal journey from 17th-century Alalakh, a Mesopotamian town along the Orontes River in present-day Turkey (not far from Harran, where Abram relocated), A fodder-list includes "one (measure of) fodder—camel". lists

camels among other domesticated animals requiring food resources Why would you need to feed a camel unless it is domesticated?

- A relief from Byblos (1800's B.C.) shows a camel kneeling, indicating its use as a beast of burden.
- cylinder seal from Syria shows the early use of camels as beasts of burden
- Cylinder Seal from Syria (1800–1650 BC) with a two-humped camel carrying a divine couple
- At the beginning of the 20th century a statuette of a dromedary carrying two water jars was found in a tomb at Rifeh. The tomb was in use during the 19th dynasty, which reigned in the 13th century B.C., and was not used again in later times. The water jars were of the type used during that century. Another piece of evidence that dromedaries were used as pack animals in Egypt as early as 1300 B.C. was a glaze picture of a dromedary with water jars found in Benha.
- Petrie found a dromedary statuette which appears to be carrying two water jars. Based on provenance and the style of the pottery and the water jars, Petrie concluded the artifact was in fact from the 19th Dynasty, dated between 1292-1190 BC.
- The oldest published reference (an Assyrian text) to the camel dates from the eleventh This text is the Broken Obelisk, probably from the reign of Ashur-bel-kala (1074-1056 BC)
- By the middle of the ninth century cavalries of camels were obviously well established, since at the Battle of Qarqar (853 BC) Shalmaneser III faced many men on horseback (and some on the backs of camels).
- The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (c. 825 B.C.)—which depicts Jehu of Israel giving tribute to the Assyrians—indicates that the Assyrians received “two-humped camels” from Egypt.
- The later use of camels is well attested. The Assyrian monarch Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) mentions kings of Arabia giving him camels to carry water for a military incursion into Egypt in 671 B.C.

Free makes an important observation that applies today just as much as it did a half century ago: “Many who have rejected this reference to Abraham’s camels seem to have assumed something which the text does not state. It should be carefully noted that the biblical reference does not necessarily indicate that the camel was common in Egypt at the time, nor does it evidence that the Egyptians had made any great progress in the breeding and domestication of the camel. It merely says that Abraham had camels. Kitchen sums up the matter: “[T]he camel was for long a *marginal* beast in most of the historic ancient Near East (including Egypt), but it was *not* wholly unknown or anachronistic before or during 2000-1100”.

The truth is, all the available evidence points to one conclusion—the limited use of domesticated camels during and before the time of Abraham did occur. *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* reaches the observation that idea of late domestication seems to be presumptuous in the light of such evidence as camel statuettes, bones, and other references that appear in archaeological materials beginning about 3,000 B.C. The supposed “anachronism” of domesticated camels during the time of the patriarchs is, in fact, an actual historical reference to the use of these animals at that time. In the final analysis, we can say that the evidence for the domestication of the camel in patriarchal times is clear, but limited.

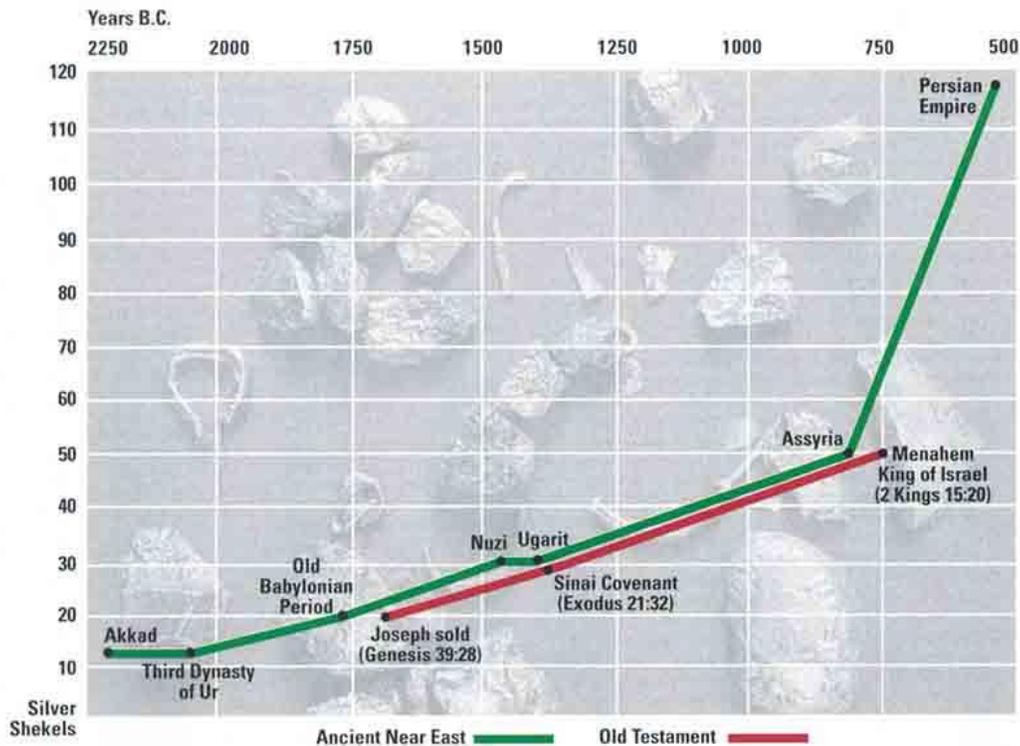
Those claiming the absence of domesticated camels during the patriarchal age must deny a wealth of evidence to the contrary. Indeed, the evidence is both early and spread over a large geographical area. It includes figurines, models, petroglyphs, burials, seals, and texts.

Kenneth A. Kitchen article in Biblical Archaeology Review 21:2, March/April 1995 “The Patriarchal Age Myth or History?” shows the Biblical data match objective facts from the ancient world in an almost uncanny way, establishing the general reliability of Biblical time periods.

What objective evidence, independent of the Bible, do we have to support the Middle Bronze Age as the Patriarchal Age?

### The Price of Slaves

One important item involves the price of slaves in silver shekels. From ancient Near Eastern sources we know the price of slaves in some detail for a period lasting about 2,000 years, from 2400 B.C. to 400 B.C. Under the Akkad Empire (2371–2191 B.C.), a decent slave fetched 10–15 silver shekels, though the price dropped slightly to 10 shekels during the Third Dynasty of Ur (2113–2006 B.C.). In the second millennium B.C., during the early Babylonian period, the price of slaves rose to about 20 shekels, as we know from the Laws of Hammurabi and documents from Mari and elsewhere from the 19th and 18th centuries B.C. By the 14th and 13th centuries B.C., at Nuzi and Ugarit, the price crept up to 30 shekels and sometimes more. Another five hundred years later, Assyrian slave markets demanded 50 to 60 shekels for slaves; and under the Persian Empire (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.), soaring inflation pushed prices up to 90 and 120 shekels. These data provide a solid body of evidence that we can compare with the figures in the Bible, in which the price of slaves is mentioned on several occasions



The price of slaves in the ancient Near East from the third millennium B.C. through the first millennium B.C. Prices listed in the Bible closely conform to known prices in the Near East at periods to which Biblical events can be dated. This correspondence makes it unlikely that the Biblical numbers were invented centuries later by writers who composed the early history.



Some begin with a prologue, in which the history of a king or people is recounted; others begin by invoking witnesses, such as standing stones or a god; still others begin with a short preamble or title, in which the reasons for the pact are laid out.

In Genesis 14:13, for example, we learn that Abraham enters into an alliance with three Amorite rulers, Mamre, Eshcol and Aner. Abraham and Isaac make separate treaties with Abimelech of Gerar (Genesis 21, 26); and Jacob makes an agreement with Laban (Genesis 31). From the brief reports of these three covenants, it is possible to cull the essential elements.

First, in each case, an introductory oath is part of the pact. The oath is demanded (Genesis 21:23, 26:28) and given (Genesis 21:24, 26:31, 31:53b). At times, the oath is preceded by the invocation of witnesses: In Jacob's pact with Laban, a mound of stones and a pillar serve as witnesses (Genesis 31:44–52); in Abraham's pact with Abimelech, God himself is called upon to act as witness (Genesis 21:23).

Next, the agreements or stipulations are given. In Abraham's pact with Abimelech, Abraham agrees not to deal falsely with Abimelech or his family (implying respect for family succession). Certain rights to terrain and water supplies are also stipulated (Genesis 21:23, 30). Isaac's pact with Abimelech includes a stipulation to refrain from hostilities: "You will not do us harm, just as we have not molested you" (Genesis 26:29). Jacob and Laban, in their covenant, establish a boundary line between their territories (Genesis 31:52).

Last, the event is marked by a curse as sanction for violation of the treaty's terms, which seems to be implied in the words sworn by Jacob and Laban: "May the God of Abraham and the god of Nahor judge between us" (Genesis 31:53). In addition, the completion of the pact is sometimes accompanied by a ceremony. The agreements between Isaac and Abimelech and between Jacob and Laban are marked by a feast (Genesis 26:30, 31:54); and Abraham apparently plants a tree to celebrate his agreement with Abimelech (Genesis 21:33).

Some treaties have become partly available from Mari and Tell Leilan dating to the early second millennium B.C., where we would place the patriarchs. These treaties exhibit a different basic format—similar to the patriarchal pacts in the Bible. First, deities are cited as witnesses to the oath binding the parties to the treaty. Curses do not appear in the preliminary "little tablets," but only in the final "large tablets." The invocation of the deities and the oath are followed by stipulations—prohibiting hostilities, establishing commercial ties, forming alliances, and so on. A ceremony may accompany the making of the treaty, consisting of a feast and sacrifice, or the exchange of gifts.

The common features between these early second-millennium treaties and the covenants recorded in Genesis are striking. The treaties, alliances and covenants described in Genesis differ in form and structure from the treaties of the third millennium B.C., but are very much like the treaties of the early second millennium B.C.—corresponding to our dating of the Patriarchal Age to the early second millennium, say about 1950–1700 B.C. Numerous Hittite imperial treaties from the 14th and 13th centuries B.C. have been found that reflect an elaborate seven-fold scheme: title (preamble), historical prologue, stipulations, a recitation of the deposit of the treaty, a reading of the treaty (optional), witnesses, curses and blessings.

Interestingly, this seven-fold structure also characterizes the Sinai Covenant (Exodus 20–31, 34–35; Leviticus 1–7, 11–26).

## Geo-Political Conditions

A third kind of evidence concerns the changing geo-political situation in the Biblical lands. In Genesis 14, as mentioned above, Abraham and five Canaanite kings fight a war near the Dead Sea against their overlords, consisting of an alliance of four kings from Elam, Mesopotamia and southern Anatolia. The situation in Canaan is not very helpful in answering our chronological question, except to say that the alliance between Abraham and the Canaanite kings must have occurred before the 12th century. Despite the abundance of cuneiform records from Mesopotamia, none of the kings who, according to Genesis 14, fought against the Abrahamic alliance have been identified in an extra-Biblical account. Nevertheless, the right names go with the right places in Genesis 14. Military campaigns from Mesopotamia into the Levant are well attested from the third millennium B.C. (Akkad and Third Dynasty of Ur) through the early second millennium B.C. A war by the Abrahamic alliance against an alliance of kings from the east in the patriarchal period is certainly plausible. From about the 18th century B.C. on, however, the situation drastically changed in Mesopotamia. The triumphs of Hammurabi of Babylon and Shamsi-Adad I of Assyria ended the era of rival alliances, with the numerous Mesopotamian city-states vanishing forever.

## References to Egypt

Biblical references to Egypt provide additional evidence for dating the patriarchs to the Middle Bronze Age. Abraham and Jacob both encounter Egyptian pharaohs. Abram (as he then was) sojourns in Egypt during a famine (Genesis 12:10–20); Jacob, with his 088family, visits Joseph in Egypt during another famine, remaining there until he dies 17 years later (Genesis 45:28–47:28). Jacob, we are told, settled in Goshen, in the eastern Nile delta. Therefore, from the 20th to the 16th centuries B.C., the timespan we have on other grounds assigned to the patriarchs (19th to 17th centuries B.C.), the Egyptian government had a royal presence in Goshen in the eastern Nile delta.

## Patriarchal Names

To pursue a different line of argument, the form of the patriarchal names themselves can help us date the Patriarchal Age. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and even Ishmael (Abraham's son by Hagar) have names that in their original language (Yitzchak, Ya'akov, Yoseph and Yishmael) begin with an i/y-prefix; scholars of Northwest Semitic languages call these "Amorite imperfective" names. For the early second millennium B.C., however, we do have numbers. In a standard collection of over 6,000 names from the early second millennium B.C., 16 percent of the nearly 1,360 personal names beginning with i/y are of the Amorite imperfective type. This type constitutes 55 percent of all names beginning with i/y. Compare this with the Late Bronze Age (late second millennium B.C.), which includes the archives from Tell el-Amarna and Ugarit. At Ugarit, out of 1,860 names in alphabetic script, only 40 are Amorite imperfectives, a mere 2 percent. Of the syllabically written names, only 120 out of 4,050 names are of this type, a mere 3 percent. Of all names beginning with i/y, the figures for Amorite imperfectives are down to 30 percent and 25 percent—that is, about half of what they were in patriarchal times. Of all Phoenician names, Amorite imperfectives constitute only 6 percent, making up but 12 percent of all i/y-names. In Aramaic, the corresponding figures are just over 0.5 percent for Amorite imperfectives, these constituting barely over 12 percent of all names that begin with i/y. From Assyrian sources, only a dozen out of nearly 5,000 names from the first millennium are of the Amorite imperfective type, a miserable ¼ of 1 percent; and these Amorite imperfective names make up only 1.6 percent of all i/y-names.