

## The Selling of Joseph

The selling of Joseph occurs in Genesis 37:25-28, 36 and is cited by destructive critics as a doublet that supports the Documentary Hypothesis, because there is a contradiction that would only come from separate sources: one account lists **Ishmaelites** as the traders that purchase Joseph and the other account lists **Midianites**.

The supposed doublet does not exist because:

1. The traders, Ishmaelites and Midianites, are not two distinctly different types of people. In Judges 8:22-28, Midianites were used interchangeably with Ishmaelites.

Judges 8:22-28 (The names are highlighted)

22) Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, "Rule over us, both you and your son, also your son's son, for you have delivered us from the hand of **Midian**." 23) But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you." 24) Yet Gideon said to them, "I would request of you, that each of you give me an earring from his spoil." (For they had gold earrings, because they were **Ishmaelites**.) 25) They said, "We will surely give them." So they spread out a garment, and every one of them threw an earring there from his spoil. 26) The weight of the gold earrings that he requested was 1,700 shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments and the pendants and the purple robes which were on the **kings of Midian**, and besides the neck bands that were on their camels' necks. 27) Gideon made it into an ephod, and placed it in his city, Ophrah, and all Israel played the harlot with it there, so that it became a snare to Gideon and his household. 28) So **Midian** was subdued before the sons of Israel, and they did not lift up their heads anymore. And the land was undisturbed for forty years in the days of Gideon.

2. This repetition is consistent with Ancient Near Eastern literary style.

Ishmael and Midian, the patriarchs of the Ismaelites and Midianites, were stepbrothers and sons of Abraham.

Ishmael was the first born of Hagar, Sarah's Egyptian servant (Gen 16:1-16). Because of God's covenant with Abraham, Ishmael was blessed with many descendants even though he was not the heir. Ishmael had 12 sons and was the father of nomadic tribes who resided in the desert of northern Arabia (Gen 25:12-18). The Bible does not mention any Ishmael king, only princes, and it seems that there wasn't any national boundary to their area. Any from the Arabian desert could claim to be a descendant of Ishmael.

Midian was the son of Keturah, a concubine who married Abraham (became his wife) after Sarah's death (Gen 25:2-4). Midian's descendants did have kings (Num 31:8) and resided near Moab. Ishmaelites who settled among the Midianites were considered Midianites.

Two different inspired biblical authors, Moses and Samuel, considered Ishmaelites and Midianites as the same group of people.