

# Actions Today, History for Tomorrow: An Appraisal of The Book of Jasher

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**Abstract:** *It is not disputable that a lot of individuals fail to realize the intensity of their actions today despite the fact that, there are majority of learned individual in the twenty-first century. Many people had read about great philosophers of the past, whose legacies are still very valid in the contemporary times and as well, some individuals of bad influence whose examples are adopted for lessons rather than inculcating. These examples are meant to pass a lesson to the contemporary generation, which is the fact that, actions today serves as history in the future for other people to learn from. The book of Jasher, an extra biblical source which is also referred to in the Christian Bible is briefly examined as it contains a wider detail of some biblical stories which is to be used as a picture of what record looks like for the contemporary men and women to live right rather than wrong in order to have a good legacy even after end of physical living. As such, this study make use of two landmark stories from the book of Jasher with good and bad examples for men (generic) to make the right choice they wish to be remembered for after earthly existence.*

**Keywords:** Jashar, History, Joshua, Cain, Documentation.

## Introduction

The existence of man and continuity in dealings for man has been based on initial exploits by individuals that have lived the surface of the earth at one point or the other. A very popular saying in the Southwestern part of Nigeria explains that, “what is done today becomes history tomorrow” as such, discoveries are referred to as discoveries because, at some point in the history of the world, some individuals invented such or lived such way thereby creating an avenue for development by subsequent generations.

The absence of history in the dealings of humanity will imply doom and stagnancy for humanity this is because, scientific and technological discoveries are built on existing facts or theories propounded at some point in history. Philosophies and ideas from the field of humanities are bent on advancing thoughts that once existed in the history of man. This led to explaining the meaning of research which can be partitioned into two words-‘re’ and ‘search’ which implies searching again. Research, as defined in Oxford dictionary is the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.<sup>1</sup> Without an existing content, researching will be impossible Vis-à-vis that which is researched into is the history of the phenomenon.

Historical books were not unacquainted with the content of the Bible and this contained records of events and sayings that are traceable to antiquity. The book of Jasher among others like, the chronicles of the kings of Judah (1 Kings 14:29; 22:45), chronicles of the kings of Judah (1 Kings 22:39; 2 Kings 1:18), is an historical document that encapsulates a lot of ancient figures and their exploits in history, the understanding of which can aid in figuring things to be inculcated and advanced in contemporary times in preparations for the future, having the clarity that the same way the past heroes are being read today for deducing lessons and serving as examples is the same way that the future generation will read the kind of living that the current generation also represents. This work therefore investigates into the content of the book of Jasher, which is referred to in the Bible (Books of Joshua and Samuel) for the need to live an exemplary life that is to be beneficial to the future generations.

## Importance of Historical Documentation to Humanity

Documentation is certainly an act that cannot be done away from because of its necessity to sustaining a particular legacy. This led to keeping business records, keeping minutes of a meeting, giving report of a particular event, reporting news on national dailies among other things. According to Leland Brown, a business expert, reports must be adapted to the reader’s point of view. The reader is to be considered in making report because; the purpose of reporting in the first place is not for the writer but rather

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<sup>1</sup>“Research” in Advanced Oxford Dictionary [www.oxforddictionary.com](http://www.oxforddictionary.com) (Accessed on November 30, 2020)

for the understanding of the reader.<sup>2</sup> As such, record and documentation is purposeful and the purpose is for others to read beyond the immediate environment in most cases.

Same situation is applicable to history, but in a more advance module, history is a documentation that communicates to a distant generation from the generation of the writer. Standler had rightly defined history as the study of some subjects in chronological order. He emphasized the role it plays in tracing ideas back to their origin and studying the evolution of ideas or events.<sup>3</sup> In similar perception, Nasson defined history as the study of the past in order to understand the meaning and dynamics of the relationship between cause and effect in the overall development of human societies.<sup>4</sup> Mostly, history might not initially be meant to be for the distant generation, but the preservation of such text or act to pass through the test of a long time implies that, such text will be referred to as 'historical' considering its dating.

Standler also emphasized that a biographer writes a history of one person and how that person changed or influenced society.<sup>5</sup> This implies that, the deductive from an individual's life by an historian is for communicating the exploits of such person for his generation to learn from his life and more importantly to preserve such legacy or to teach a particular lesson to the forthcoming generation. Ronald Edsforth, a Professor of history explained that the essences of history is to give answers to three questions- what happened, what happened next, and why it happened.<sup>6</sup> But in addition, history is useless if it is not impactful as such, history is also to serve the purpose of influencing the readers of such text.

The emphasis placed on history does not place history as absolute paradigm for people coming after to follow suit, but having historical document serve the purpose of providing information.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, like a scientist, a historian needs to be skeptical in his approach to handling document by investigating documents that are not plausible to avoid pseudo proclamations.

In order to lay emphasis on the importance of history for humanity, the following statements by Williams, Denning, and Diamond as cited by Nasson are of great value<sup>8</sup>-

- i. I was interested mostly in history because I really did want to try and make some sense out of what the hell was going on... I figured from my education, my reading that history was the best way to figure out the way the world ticked.<sup>9</sup>
- ii. We cannot give life to the dead, but we can give them voice. We cannot give justice to the victims, but we can shake the living from their moral lethargy to change things in the present that are the consequences of the past<sup>10</sup>.
- iii. At best, history is classified among the social sciences, of which it rates as the least scientific.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Leland Brown, *Effective Business Report Writing* (Bombay: D.B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., 1981), 11.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald B. Standler, *What is history and why is it important?* ([www.rbs0.com/wh.pdf](http://www.rbs0.com/wh.pdf) Accessed on November 28, 2020), 1.

<sup>4</sup>Bill Nasson, "The Meaning and Role of History in Human Development" in *Encyclopedia of Life Support System* (np, nd), 1.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid

<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup>Information here helps an individual to adopt such kind of living or to investigate such and to avoid if it is not to be followed considering the end result of such act. Information might be true or not and that is the reason for the need to verify the authenticity of an information.

<sup>8</sup>Bill Nasson, "The Meaning and Role of History in Human Development" in *Encyclopedia of Life Support System* (np, nd), 1.

<sup>9</sup>William Appleman Williams, American Historian when recalling his students' concerns in year 1945 as contained in MAHRO, 1984

<sup>10</sup>Greg Denning, An Australian Historian rightly quoted from Ashplant and Roper, 2001

<sup>11</sup>Statement by Jared Diamond in the year 1997

The understanding of the past is therefore very cogent in the discourse about history and as such the following are presented below as importance of history to humanity;

History helps in having a clear picture of how the various aspects of society had worked in the time past in order to understand how things are working now- things such as technology, governmental systems, and the society as a whole are better understood through the availability of history. This is corroborated by Nasson's explanation of history stating that, having a basic knowledge of the past.<sup>12</sup>

History also helps man to observe and understand how people and societies behaved in the past. For example, war can be evaluated even when a nation is at peace by looking back at previous events and occurrences. The history of such people will provide data that is used to create laws or theories about various aspects of the society in order to avoid a recurrence of war in the society.

Another importance of history to humanity is the fact that it provides identity of a people. Historical data includes various evidences about how families, groups, institutions and whole countries were formed and about how they have evolved while retaining cohesion.<sup>13</sup> When an individual takes time to study the history of his family, he gets to see various inventories and records of how the family interacted with larger historical change, what the family was involved in during the time past, their presence in significant events, their achievements and this can serve as a motivation for the contemporary generation to build on such legacy and to achieve more than what their progenitors had achieved in the past.

Availability of history also helps in the understanding of current issues by seeking to know deeper things on the reason for the status of things in the society. Some issues like, why wars in Europe matter across other nations in the twentieth century? Why diseases were not quick to spread across every nation in past centuries and why diseases (for example, the corona virus pandemic) spread across nations rapidly in the twenty-first century? Why information travel so rapidly in recent times unlike in antiquity? These among others are enquiries that the study of history helps to give solution.

Finally in this section is the fact that history helps in validating the process of change over time. Facts and figures are verified only when there is historical backing to support a view or position on the evolving process of an event. Without historical documentation, changes cannot be discovered, improvement could be hindered, level of success and achievements cannot be examined<sup>14</sup>.

### Understanding the Book of Jashar

Jashar is a non-popular book<sup>15</sup> that contains comprehensive details of popular people mostly as contained in the Bible. The book of Jasher is one of the apocryphal books. There are several (as many as five) separate works by this title, all composed much later than Biblical times. The particular copy of the book used basically in this study is a translation of a Hebrew book printed in 1613.

The term, "book of Jasher" is known in Hebrew as *Sepir Ha Yasher* (transliteration), the Hebrew title of this book, means the 'Book of the Upright', the book of the righteous, or 'the Upright or Correct Record'. This title was misread as 'Jasher', and at some point Jasher was treated as a proper name; however the pronoun 'the' (hebrew 'ha') never precedes proper names.<sup>16</sup> It therefore implies that the title given to the book is an expression rather than a noun it represents. A vast number of Jewish literatures have a number of writings titled after that simple sentence.

One of the oldest of these, written in Hebrew, was first published in Venice in 1625. (There is no known manuscript of this 1625 work in existence.) Brandt expressed that he knew of thirty-two Hebrew editions of this same work that have been published since then, and he had personally examined copies of most of them. This particular book of Jasher has also been

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<sup>12</sup> Bill Nasson, 3.

<sup>13</sup> Peter N. Stearns, "Why Study History?" in *American Historical Association* (1998).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Unlike books of the Bible, or big encyclopedia, commentaries etcetera.

<sup>16</sup> The Book of Jasher: Referred to in the Book of Joshua and 2 Samuel (Salt Lake City: J.H. Parry and Company, 1887).

published in languages other than Hebrew (e.g., Yiddish, or Judaio German, 1674; Latin, 1732; English, 1840; French, 1858; and a second English translation, 1876).<sup>17</sup>

The first English edition of this book of Jasher was published (as noted above) in 1840 in New York by Mordecai Manuel Noah, a prominent Jewish writer and newspaper editor-publisher of his days. Mr. Noah secured the English translation of this work from an individual who had completed the work but was reluctant to publish it. There was a great stir in England at the time caused by an earlier fictitious book of Jasher that had been published in 1751 in London and again in Bristol in 1829. In 1833, booklets were published to expose the fraudulent claims of the fictitious work, which has since been characterized as *Pseudo-Jasher*. Because of this unfavorable climate, the translator, choosing to remain anonymous, sold his manuscript to Mr. Noah.<sup>18</sup>

The name, “book of Jashar” appears in the Bible, literally in two narratives (Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18) and there is a third likely mention of the term in I Kings 8:53 which is not translated mostly as such in most manuscript but instead translated from Hebrew as “book of songs”. This implies beyond doubt that, there exists a book that goes by that title since the Bible referred to it. But the major crisis is the inability to lay hands on the exact copy of the book. One of the reasons is that, second mention of the title as contained in 2 Samuel 1:18, which refer the reader to learning the skills of using the bow is not found in the existing material bearing the title. It implies that, the existing material is not a complete version of the real book of Jashar and as such, might have a lot of contents that had been discarded.

### The Unprecedented Event (Life of Joshua)

The above caption describes well the historical event that is to be described in this section of the study. It explores a familiar Biblical passage that is contained in the book of Jasher to which the Bible itself made reference to the detail content in the book of Jasher. The event was concluded in the book of Jasher to have never happened before and never happened after (Jas. 88:65). It shows an historical record of the exploits of Joshua in a battle, an event that had effect on the calendar of the world even till date.

This was the war that took place after the Israelites had conquered the people of Jericho and Ai which was a great victory and landmark. The news of their victory and exploit went abroad that other cities felt insecure and resolved to wage war against the Israelites.<sup>19</sup> The Gibeonites were wise enough to see a “great hand” in the victories of the Israelites and they chose not to join in the plot against the Israelites as plotted by other kingdoms around which made them to device a means of securing their lives by making a peaceful treaty with the Israelites.<sup>20</sup>

At this point, Moses, the great leader of the Israelites was already dead and Joshua had taken over the mantle of leadership for the people of God. Joshua was therefore the lead warrior as well as the leader of the people and the people were to follow his instructions and commands. The event presented here is thus the war against Adonizedek king of Jerusalem, Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king at Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, Deber king of Eglon. The biblical record of the event is contained in Joshua chapter 10.

“And when Adonizedek king of Jerusalem heard all that the children of Israel had done to Jericho and to Ai, he sent to Hoham king of Hebron and to Piram king at Jarmuth, and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Deber king of Eglon, saying, Come up to me and help me, that we may smite the children of Israel and the inhabitants of Gibeon who have made peace with the children of Israel. And they gathered themselves together and the five kings of the Amorites went up with all their camps, a mighty people numerous as the sand of the sea shore (Jasher 88:55-57).

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<sup>17</sup>E.J. Brandt, Can You Tell Me if the Book of Jasher is Authentic? <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/1981/06/i-have-a-question/can-you-tell-me-if-the-book-of-jasher-is-authentic?lang=eng> (Accessed on November 27, 2020).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid

<sup>19</sup>Probably (emphasis), the Israelites might not have attacked the settlement of those cities had they not initiated the war, but they drew the battle line, and they had Joshua with the backing of Yahweh to contend which eventually led to a great loss on their part.

<sup>20</sup>Although on discovery of their cunning plot, Joshua made them to be slaves to the Israelites but their aim was achieved as they avoided fighting against the People of Yahweh and they were defended by the Israelites against the unification of kingdom coming against them.

The battle was a collaboration of five cities against the Israelites alone but there was a greater power on the side of the Israelites they were supported greatly by God and unnatural event happened to aid the victory for the Israelites. This could be traced to the integrity displayed by Joshua, the leader of the people who never saw the need to be selfish and extorting but rather, he pursued a common goal without neglecting the God-factor.

And the Lord confounded them before the children at Israel, who smote them with a terrible slaughter in Gibeon, and pursued them along the way that goes up to Beth Horon unto Makkedah, and they fled from before the children of Israel. And whilst they were fleeing, the Lord sent upon them hailstones from heaven, and more of them died by the hailstones, than by the slaughter of the children of Israel. And the children of Israel pursued them, and they still smote them in the road, going on and smiting them. And when they were smiting, the day was declining toward evening, and Joshua said in the sight of all the people, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou moon in the valley of Ajalon, until the nation shall have revenged itself upon its enemies. And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Joshua, and the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens, and it stood still six and thirty moments, and the moon also stood still and hastened not to go down a whole day. And there was no day like that, before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man, for the Lord fought for Israel (Jasher 88:60-65).

Wiersbe rightly noted that, the miracle of the hailstorm was nothing compared to the miracle of extending the day so that Joshua could finish the battle and secure a complete victory over the enemy. His men were weary and the task was great; and if night came on, the enemy could escape. Joshua needed a special act from God to enable him to claim the victory the Lord had promised. This is the last miracle recorded in Joshua and certainly the greatest. Joshua prayed for God's help, and the Lord answered in a remarkable way<sup>21</sup>.

At the point of Joshua's exploit, little did he know that, his activities will go far in history as it is today, and the event of this war brings a peculiarity to the remembrance of his name. It is also important to note here that, previous activities of Joshua on record shows his kind of person, where humility and commitment is unarguably a paraphernalia of his character as such, being able to affect the natural event of the cosmos.

### **Bitterness: A Battle in the Mind (Life of Cain)**

A negative example of an historical figure is presented in the person of Cain. He was the elder brother to Abel, both of who were children of Adam and Eve. This event took place far back as the early year of earth formation but the story reverberates still in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because, history had documented it. The content of history about the living of Cain brings a negative prejudice in the mind of anyone hearing such name which is probably responsible for the refusal of parents to christen their children after such, especially African parents.<sup>22</sup> Names in Africa are not just signs but they are also symbols that evaluate; nature essence, characteristics, functions and orientation of an object, person or place relative to what role it plays in the sight and understanding of the one who gives the name.<sup>23</sup> As such, an African must have studied the enigma and emblem attached to a name before giving such to a child and this is why the circumstance surrounding the historical record of Cain is responsible for avoidance of giving the name to children.

### **Bitterness led Cain to be the first murderer**

Cain should have chosen to be a good first child that will ever be birthed but instead he chose the negative influence and he became precedence for people to allude to as bad example from then henceforth because of his failure to control his bitterness. He failed to act maturely forgetting that, their offering was not acceptable out of bias but rather, due to the thoughts of their hearts.

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<sup>21</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Strong*. (Wheaton, Illinois : Victor Books, 1996), 1993.

<sup>22</sup>There are some European and Americans that goes by the name Cain, with reasons best known to them but on very rare occasion will an African give such name to their children. This is because, Africans places high value to the name that an individual bears and names are believed to contribute to the kind of life, character and personhood that an individual will represent. Abdulganiy Olatunji, *et al* "Personal Name as a reality of Everyday Life: Naming Dynamics in Selected African Societies" in *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol. 8 (2015), 73. O. Chucks-Orji, *Names from Africa: Their Origin, Meaning and Pronunciation*. (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1972), and S.M. Suzmam, "Names as Pointers: Zulu Personal Naming Practices" in *Language in Society* Vol. 23 (1994).

<sup>23</sup>Benson O. Igboin, "An African Religious Discourse on Names and Identity" in *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions* Vol. 3 (2014), 27.



And the boys grew up and their father gave them a possession in the land; and Cain was a tiller of the ground, and Abel a keeper of sheep. And it was at the expiration of a few years, that they brought an approximating offering to the Lord, and Cain brought from the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought from the firstlings of his flock from the fat thereof, and God turned and inclined to Abel and his offering, and a fire came down from the Lord from heaven and consumed it. And unto Cain and his offering the Lord did not turn, and he did not incline to it, for he had brought from the inferior fruit of the ground before the Lord, and Cain was jealous against his brother Abel on account of this, and he sought a pretext to slay him. And in some time after, Cain and Abel his brother, went one day into the field to do their work; and they were both in the field, Cain tilling and ploughing his ground, and Abel feeding his flock; and the flock passed that part which Cain had ploughed in the ground, and it sorely grieved Cain on this account. And Cain approached his brother Abel in anger, and he said unto him, what is there between me and thee, that thou comest to dwell and bring thy flock to feed in my land? And Abel answered his brother Cain and said unto him, What is there between me and thee, that thou shalt eat the flesh of my flock and clothe thyself with their wool? And now therefore, put off the wool of my sheep with which thou hast clothed thyself, and recompense me for their fruit and flesh which thou hast eaten, and when thou shalt have done this, I will then go from thy land as thou hast said? And Cain said to his brother Abel, Surely if I slay thee this day, who will require thy blood from me? And Abel answered Cain, saying, Surely God who has made us in the earth, he will avenge my cause, and he will require my blood from thee shouldst thou slay me, for the Lord is the judge and arbiter, and it is he who will requite man according to his evil, and the wicked man according to the wickedness that he may do upon earth. And now, if thou shouldst slay me here, surely God knoweth thy secret views, and will judge thee for the evil which thou didst declare to do unto me this day. And when Cain heard the words which Abel his brother had spoken, behold the anger of Cain was kindled against his brother Abel for declaring this thing And Cain hastened and rose up, and took the iron part of his ploughing instrument, with which he suddenly smote his brother and he slew him, and Cain spilt the blood of his brother Abel upon the earth, and the blood of Abel streamed upon the earth before the flock. (Jashar 2:14-25)

He could not control his anger and the bitterness led him to act out of impulse for an offence not committed by Abel. They both chose to offer sacrifice to God and God chose to accept Abel's offering and to neglect the offering of Cain. That was clear enough for Cain to know that his offering was faulty and should have approached God who they offered to but instead he transferred his aggression on his innocent brother.

### **He was probed**

After the death of Abel, the story continued as his blood was demanding vengeance. One could imagine how Cain might have lied on getting home about the disappearance of his brother. Probably he might have chosen to lie like the brothers of Joseph in Genesis 37:31-33 or he might have chosen to be so bold to declare to believe that his parents cannot do anything to him, being the first son. But God chose to respond to the cry of Abel's life

And after this Cain repented having slain his brother, and he was sadly grieved, and he wept over him and it vexed him exceedingly. And Cain rose up and dug a hole in the field, wherein he put his brother's body, and he turned the dust over it. And the Lord knew what Cain had done to his brother, and the Lord appeared to Cain and said unto him, Where is Abel thy brother that was with thee? And Cain dissembled, and said, I do not know, am I my brother's keeper? And the Lord said unto him, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground where thou hast slain him. For thou hast slain thy brother and hast dissembled before me, and didst imagine in thy heart that I saw thee not, nor knew all thy actions. But thou didst this thing and didst slay thy brother for naught and because he spoke rightly to thee, and now, therefore, cursed be thou from the ground which opened its mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand, and wherein thou didst bury him. And it shall be when thou shalt till it, it shall no more give thee its strength as in the beginning, for thorns and thistles shall the ground produce, and thou shalt be moving and wandering in the earth until the day of thy death. And at that time Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, from the place where he was, and he went moving and wandering in the land toward the east of Eden, he and all belonging to him (Jashar 1:26-33).

Apparently, Cain does not feel sorry and was not ready to apologise for his act of murdering his own brother, instead he was making one excuse or the other which eventually led to the verdict that was placed on him.

### **The end of Cain**

Despite being cursed by God, Cain was blessed with children to sustain his posterity. A narrative of his posterity is contained in Genesis 4:17- 22 where the order of their birth was, Cain-Enoch-Israd-Mehujael-Methusael-Lamech-Tubal Cain.

And Lamech, the son of Methusael, became related to Cainan by marriage, and he took his two daughters for his wives, and Adah conceived and bare a son to Lamech, and she called his name Jabal. And in the end of days and

years, when Zillah became old, the Lord opened her womb. And she conceived and bare a son and she called his name Tubal Cain, saying, After I had withered away have I obtained him from the Almighty God. And she conceived again and bare a daughter, and she called her name Naamah, for she said, After I had withered away have I obtained pleasure and delight. And Lamech was old and advanced in years, and his eyes were dim that he could not see, and Tubal Cain, his son, was leading him and it was one day that Lamech went into the field and Tubal Cain his son was with him, and whilst they were walking in the field, Cain the son of Adam advanced towards them; for Lamech was very old and could not see much, and Tubal Cain his son was very young. And Tubal Cain told his father to draw his bow, and with the arrows he smote Cain, who was yet far off, and he slew him, for he appeared to them to be an animal. And the arrows entered Cain's body although he was distant from them, and he fell to the ground and died. And the Lord requited Cain's evil according to his wickedness, which he had done to his brother Abel, according to the word of the Lord which he had spoken. And it came to pass when Cain had died, that Lamech and Tubal went to see the animal which they had slain, and they saw, and behold Cain their grandfather was fallen dead upon the earth. And Lamech was very much grieved at having done this, and in clapping his hands together he struck his son and caused his death. And the wives of Lamech heard what Lamech had done, and they sought to kill him. (Jashar 2:17, 23-32)

A curse was placed by God on anyone that would kill Cain (Gen. 4:15) and this was more likely why his great-grandson in the sixth generation who killed him, with the use of bow, was immediately killed at the prime of his age, and worst of it, by his own father. The use of bow was proposed by David to be learnt by the children of Judah from the book of Jashar, but definitely it was not this kind of situation that he must have been referring to in his mourning state of his friend, Jonathan and King Saul.

### **Influence of History on the Current Age**

Historical and documented contents have been useful from time past- Chronicles of the kings of Judah, and Chronicles of the kings of Israel must have been repeatedly read to the listening of princes that wishes to become king of the land to know events that took place in the reign (era) of their forefathers. Other wisdom sayings are also seen to be paralleled with the book of Proverbs for example a portion of the contents of the Book is parallel with writings from Ptahhotep,<sup>24</sup> Amenemope<sup>25</sup> etc. which implies that, Solomon must have consulted with some of these books in order to arrive at such wonderful content in the book of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.<sup>26</sup>

Just as the above, the content of the book of Jashar most especially the two historical narratives traced to the Bible as explored in this study has a great influence on contemporary minds. The narratives help to make a choice of avoiding the living of bitterness which destroys things rather than making things right and also the Joshua story tells of the reward attached to commitment and respect for God. Below are some influences that history and documentation has on the contemporary generation;

Studying history helps an individual in being a good citizen. This is the most common justification for the place of history in school curricula.<sup>27</sup> This helps the students to recognize the role of heroes in the past in the history of their country or state and as well aid their determination to sustain the legacy of their forefathers and as well make their own contribution by taking up from where they stopped in order to develop the works of the heroes. Getting to have those determinations is as a result of the motivation that must have been gotten from studying the history.

Another importance of studying history and having documentation is the ability to assess evidence<sup>28</sup>. The study of history aids in building experience of dealing with and assessing various available evidences, the sorts of evidence historians utilizes in

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<sup>24</sup> He was a vizier of ancient Egypt who attained high repute in wisdom literature (ca. 2450 BC). He wrote mostly for young men of influential families who would soon assume one of the higher offices. And his emphasis was discipline, hardwork, and obedience to a father and a superior, a teaching also traced to the teachings in the book of Proverbs. "Ptahhotep" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In <https://www.britannica.com/biblicalliterature> (Accessed on December 7, 2020)

<sup>25</sup> Amenemope was the author of the work known today as "The instruction of Amenemope", a piece of Egyptian writing which has been dated within the broad 1000-600 BC. The book comprises of 30 chapters and the Hebrew text refers to it as one of its basis for compiling its anthology. "The instruction of Amenemope" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biblicalliterature> (Accessed on December 7, 2020)

<sup>26</sup> "Proverbs" in *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/biblicalliterature> (Accessed on December 7, 2020)

<sup>27</sup> The writers also referred to the fact that, studying history in schools helps in inculcating morals in the attitudes of young ones. Cosmas Cobbold and Charles A. Oppong, "Reechoing the Place of History in the School Curriculum" in *International Journal of Educational Leadership Vol. 3. 4*.

shaping the most accurate pictures of the past that they can. It aids in weighing and interpreting the statements of politicians in the past and how well they stood by their promises. It aids in checking whose statements is true and whose statements is false based on the tallying point of their campaign stands and in the current.

Furthermore, history aids in granting the ability to assess Conflicting Interpretations. Learning history means gaining some skill in sorting through diverse, often conflicting interpretations.<sup>29</sup> The study of history aids in the understanding of how various societies work at a given point in history. The central goal of historical study—is inherently imprecise, and the same certainly holds true for understanding what is going on in the present day. As such, the evaluative purpose of living previously and living now is met through the study of history by the contemporary generation.

Historical study, in sum, is crucial to the promotion of that elusive creature, the well-informed citizen. It provides basic factual information about the background of political institutions and about the values and problems that affect the social well-being of a people and as well helps in rating the previous ‘tourists’ in a particular field of life.

### Importance of Today’s Actions for Future Generation

The understanding of the previous section of this study is directly applicable under this section as the events that take place in contemporary and recent times will eventually become historical to the future generations. And the same role played by history to the current generation is the same role that actions now will serve for the generations to come. But a bit diversification is to be considered in this section by further examining and emphasizing the importance of the living today for the generations to come and these are discussed below;

The kind of contributions that is embraced by the contemporary generation will determine the level of growth that had been achieved in this generation. It is unarguable that this age has advance a lot of technological ideas, scientific inventions, like the Artificial Intelligence (AI)<sup>30</sup> and philosophical ideas among others. Sustenance of this legacy as well as further improvement will make the coming generation to draw out a great conclusion on how much had been contributed to their well being during their time and as well, they will only need to take up from where this generation has stopped.

Also, the actions of today which eventually becomes history tomorrow will determine the picture of generation their forefathers were. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century is known today as the age of enlightenment as this era saw the emergence of great minds in history both in the field of science and philosophy- people like, Isaac Newton, Martin Luther, David Hume, Thomas Paine, John Locke<sup>31</sup>, among others gave a new phase to rationality in the history of humanity and they are well respected for this contributions to the history of humanity. In the same vein, the future generation will make a coinage to refer to this current age in some years to come and such coinage will depend on the current kind of productivity that the current age is able to present.

It tells of the effort made by their predecessors on the surface of the earth to make the world a better place to live. It is no gainsaying that, a lot of development has been recorded in the 21<sup>st</sup> century but more importantly, the posterity of each man would seek to know what their own father had contributed, the kind of life lived, in order to know if they can build on such legacy or not.

Almost similar to the above is the fact that, every child loves to advance the lifestyle of his biological parent as such, if the world will be a peaceful place to live, men and women alike should strive to lay good legacies for the forthcoming generation as they will definitely get to know through history, what kind of lifestyle their forefathers lived even to the fourth and fifth generations.

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<sup>28</sup> Michael M. Berdine, “The Importance of History” a paper presented in the CMC Graduation of year 2013 <https://cambridgemuslimcollege.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CMCPapers> Accessed on December 11, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> This is a field that has come to prominence in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its effect is on the rise as various advancement have eventually occurred in aiding the activities of man. Artificial Intelligence is a field defined as the study of “Intelligent agents”. This implies any device that perceives its environment and takes actions that maximizes its chance of successfully achieving its goals. David Poole, Alan Mackworth, and Randy Goebel, *Computational Intelligence: A Logical Approach* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1. It could also be described as machines that mimic “cognitive” functions that humans associate with the human mind, such as learning or solving a problem Stuart Russel and Peter Norving, *Artificial Intelligence: A modern Approach 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall), 2.

<sup>31</sup> Alison Guider, Freedom of Expression and the Enlightenment. A Thesis Submitted in the University of Mississippi. (2015). 8.



## Conclusion

This study is a call for honest living and rightful living as people relate with one another in carrying out their responsibilities knowing very well that, what is done today matters a lot tomorrow which is the future and as such, a rethink in executing an act will go a long way in making a society better and as well making individuals to be better.

The book of Jasher as earlier emphasized encapsulates the idea of a proper documentation as coined from the name, 'book of the upright' or 'correct record' which implies that the content of the book are what had actually happened and must have been properly penned down by the writers of the document.

Considering the clarity of the various dispositions about the validity of the book of Jasher, this study does not totally hold to the veracity of the existing book but the study is focused at deducing the importance of putting down a right legacy. This is based on the fact that, a real book existed which bears the nomenclature "book of Jasher" and though lost, the mention of it in the Bible implies that it had existed<sup>32</sup> and it must have contained much detail equivalent to what is in circulation today or more broad than the contemporary version.

This study concludes with these words on "Why study history?" The answer is because we virtually must. In order to gain access to the laboratory of human experience and to aid current living for future rightful and developed living<sup>33</sup>. Which is why the history of Joshua and Cain is considered for the twenty-first century men and women to decide right on what history carries about them as it is difficult to tell how far the deeds of an individual can be sustained in history.

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<sup>32</sup>And probably still existing, but not yet detected as a whole

<sup>33</sup> Peter N. Stearns.