

GENESIS

The 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament form one complete book, the Bible, setting forth great truths.

1. The reality of creation.
2. The everlasting nature of Christ.
3. The kingship of God.
4. Man's freedom of choice and accountability unto God.

As to the first truth, the Biblical account of creation is real. All evidence supports the literal 24-hour days of creation. How can this be true? How can something be brought into existence from nothing? We do not know.

But "by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."
(Hebrews 11:3)

The second truth, which forms the heart of the Bible, is that Christ was with God from the beginning. He and God are one.

The Old Testament begins with Christ as, "The Word that became flesh."
(John 1:1, 14)

The New Testament ends with Christ, the author of salvation. (Revelation 22:20)

The third great truth that unifies the Bible, (the kingship of God) is demonstrated over and over again. God demands explicit obedience to His commands, as seen in many Old Testament examples such as the case of Nadab and Abihu. (Leviticus 10:1-3)

As to the fourth truth, God does not force anyone to obey Him but, "Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost." (Revelation 22:17) Each one must give an account unto God for his or her choice. (Rom. 14:11-12) It is important to know your Bible.

1. In order to have everlasting life. (John 17:3)
2. To know the greatest book ever written. God inspired all Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16) and all the writers were “moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)
3. So that you will know who you are.

Only from the Bible can you know your origin, mission, and destiny. God made man in His image, and man became a morally responsible, living soul. (Genesis 1:26-27; 2:7) Our mission is to glorify God and become as Godlike as possible in preparation for the judgment and our personal accountability to God. (Romans 14:11-12)

4. To be saved from sin.

The Bible is the only book that has as its main message the salvation of sinners. (Acts 2:38, 1 John 4:14, Romans 1:16, Mark 16:15-16)

5. In order to identify the church of the Lord and know its importance.

When one obeys the gospel by being baptized into Christ, he is born again of water and Spirit (John 3:3-5), into the family of God. The church is the spiritual body of Christ of which Christ is the head. (Ephesians 1:22-23)

6. To find the Christian way of life, worship, and service.

The Scriptures alone furnish us completely unto all good works. (2 Timothy 3:16-17, Titus 2:12)

7. In order to reach the highest goal. (Philippians 3:14)

Paul counted all things but loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord (Philippians 3:8). We should strive to be like Paul, who near the time of his departure from this life could say: (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Introduction to Genesis

Genesis is more than the history of man. It is the first chapter in the redemption of man. Man is a spiritual being, made in the image of God, and he can never find lasting happiness until the image is restored.

Genesis is not a book of science or history. It is a book of faith. It is by faith that we know how the worlds were made. (Hebrews 11:3)

Our goal in the study of Genesis and the entire Bible is to provide a foundation for a lifetime of careful study. Only a skeleton can be built in this program of study. But such a skeleton can be “fleshed out” over the course of a lifetime.

Ordinary people can understand the Word of God. The Bible was written in the common language of ordinary people of the time with the expectation that they could read, hear it and comprehend it.

The Bible is divided into three periods of time or dispensations.

1. Patriarchal – This period of time began at creation and goes to the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai. It lasted for 2500 years and was a family government and worship.
2. Jewish – This period of time began at Mount Sinai and ends at the beginning of the Lord's church. It lasted 1500 years and was a national government and worship with the Levitical tribe appointed as the priesthood.
3. Christian – This period of time began with the Lord's church (Acts 2) and continues until the end of time and was an individual and personal worship relationship with Christ through the church.

The Bible is a book with the theme of redemption.

Every statement of Genesis chapter 1 is given such simplicity that a child can read it and understand what it is saying. However, do not confuse simplicity with emptiness. Even though it is written in simple language, it has a depth for one to spend a lifetime in study.

Genesis shows that man belongs to two worlds. Man belongs to the physical world but he also belongs to a spiritual world. This book also gives a record of man's sin and his need for redemption. Genesis 3:15 helps us understand the nature of sin.

Genesis is the history of one genealogical line that flowered and terminated in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. It is a history of the Messianic line. It also relates how Israel was selected from among the nations of the world and became God's chosen people.

Moses is the author of Genesis. He wrote the book approximately 1500 years before Christ was born, by the inspiration of God. (Exodus 17:14; 24:4; Numbers 33:1-2)

The first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch) are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

Chapter 1

The Old Testament was almost all written in the Hebrew language as inspired by God. "Inspired" means that God breathed into the mind of Moses the thoughts and words that God wanted recorded for mankind.

Verse 1

God wants to focus our attention upon Him as the source of all things, the Creator of all things. Accept God's existence and the rest of God's Word is not difficult to understand. Deny it, and no foundation is left for life, law, faith, hope, love, truth, justice, freedom, beauty, goodness, holiness, or any other value.

The word "created" in the Hebrew language is "*bara*" which means created out of nothing. Our universe did not exist from eternity nor was it fashioned out of pre-existing matter. It was called into existence by the voice of God and came into existence instantaneously. In verse 27, the Hebrew word "created" in the Hebrew language is "*yashad*" and means created out of something already existing.

Scientists say that there are "five things" necessary for creating something.

1. Time — In the beginning
2. Energy — Created

3. Force — God
4. Space — Heavens
5. Matter — Earth

Verses 2-5

There were four deficiencies mentioned after the earth is created.

1. Formless, a waste—only in the sense of having not yet been put into shape.
2. Void, empty—meaning a region without inhabitants of any kind.
3. Darkness—the new creation was wrapped in complete and absolute darkness.
4. Deep—that which lay under the darkness was deep. “Deep” means surging, raging, primeval waters.

The Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters anticipates the work of the Spirit in the six creative days. (Isaiah 45:18; Exodus 20:11; 31:17)

Light is essential for life and existence. God proceeds in an orderly fashion—He begins at the natural starting point. The deficiency of darkness has been removed.

In verse 4, “the light was good,” in the Hebrew language, it means it was “excellent.” Only the “light” is called “good” not the “darkness,” nor the co-existence of light and darkness.

The word “day” as used in verse 5 in the Hebrew language is the word “*yom*.” It means “to be hot, a day (as the warm hours) whether literally from sunrise to sunset, or from one sunset to the next.” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance) “Day” is used 14 times in the creation account and is always a translation of the Hebrew word “*yom*.”

The Hebrew custom was to divide the day into evenings and mornings. Some teach that “days” in the creation were “millions” of days long.

Note: On the third day plants were created. The sun did not appear until the fourth day. How could plants have lived through a “day” millions of years long without sunlight? The Hebrew word “day” (*yom*) when used with numbers (cardinal—427) or (ordinal—427th or 2nd) always refers to a period of twenty-four hours.

Adam was created on the sixth day. He lived through the sixth and seventh days in the Garden of Eden. Sometime after the seventh day he was expelled from the Garden of Eden. His wife bore Cain and Abel. At the time of the birth of the third son, Seth, the Bible says Adam was 130 years old. (Genesis 5:3)

Therefore, the sixth and seventh days cannot refer to periods of time thousands of years in duration. Nowhere in the Bible does “evenings,” “mornings,” or “day” refer to a long geologic period.

Verses 6-8

Expanse or firmament is the area we call sky, the habitat of the wind, clouds, and the space in which celestial bodies of our solar system move in their courses.

Watery vapors formed an envelope of mist around the earth, which God parted into two divisions, the clouds above, and the solid masses of water collected upon the earth.

Verses 9-13

There had to be light, and there had to be atmosphere before there could be any vegetation upon the earth. God said that the waters were to be gathered together in one place and all the oceans became one body of water. They are all in one body even though continents separate the waters into various oceans. (Psalm 104:5-9)

Plant life was necessary before animal life, since all life on this earth owes its existence to the fact that green plants are able to store up the energy from the sun. Photosynthesis begins which takes in sunlight and pumps out oxygen.

Verses 14-19

The sun, moon, and stars were in existence but were not yet doing their assigned work. Their purpose in the creation was to give light that would separate the day from the night. They were also to be signs, seasons, days, and years.

The “fourth day” seems to mark the time during which the air was cleared of its thick vapors, so that the heavenly bodies become visible.

Verses 20-23

Following the appearance of plant life, animal life was created. The word “creatures” in verse 20 is translated from the word “*nephesh*” which means “soul.”

This is the first time that life in souls or living souls appears and from the Biblical viewpoint indicates that plants have no life. “Soul” is regarded as nothing more than that which breathes.

“Great sea monsters” just means a creature of some length, such as whales, sharks, crocodiles, and alligators.

Verses 24-31

The “higher” animals and man were created on the sixth day. They were formed out of the earth, the chemical constituents of which are the same as those of animal bodies.

God created three classes of living animals. The “beasts” means to move about lightly or to glide about. “Creepers” means those animals with short legs that move upon the earth or close to the ground. “Cattle” means domestic animals.

Next God says, “Let us make man in Our image.” This points to the dignity of man. “In God’s likeness” means an intellectual and spiritual likeness, intelligence, moral power, and holiness. Man is an intelligent being, endowed with a will and a moral nature. Man is to exercise dominion over the rest of God’s creation.

Plants were given to man and animals as food and remained so until after the flood. All were appointed to continue their species according to their own likeness, and all were blessed with fertility.

God now surveys what He has created and pronounces it as “very good,” perfect in its kind, useful in its purpose, and entirely subject to His holy laws.

Chapter 2

Note: The first three verses of chapter 2 are really the conclusion of the creation account of chapter 1.

Verses 1-3

The six days of creation are followed by a day of rest when God ceased from His finished work. Even though God finished His creation, He continued to sustain and bless His creatures. (John 5:17)

This rest is not the rest required after exhaustion. This day of rest was sanctified or hallowed as a memorial to the finished creation.

Verses 4-9

In verse 4 the name LORD God appears for the first time. The word LORD in Hebrew is “*Yahweh*” and God is “*Elohim*.” *Yahweh* is the distinctive name of the God of Israel. The Jewish people refrained from pronouncing “*Yahweh*” pronouncing in its stead the word “*Adonai*,” meaning Lord.

Yahweh portrays the idea of strength, power to effect, and properly describes God in that character of Creator, Sustainer, and Supreme Governor of the world. The word “LORD” distinguishes the Father from the Son and the Holy Spirit. This separates the work of the Father from that of the Son and the Holy Spirit.

There are two deficiencies in the created world mentioned in verse 5. God takes care of that by causing it to rain upon the earth and appoints man to cultivate the earth.

The rising of the mists, their condensation, and the regular falling as rain, is the meaning of the word “mists.” This would remove the first deficiency.

The second deficiency is removed when God formed man of dust and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Dust does not refer to dry pulverized earth but to a “damp mass of the finest earth.” The term does not mean “mud” either.

God formed man with a relationship to both heaven and earth lest man form too high an estimate of himself. “God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” It was God’s own vital breath that gave life to man.

Adam was not created in the Garden of Eden, he was created and then placed in the garden to cultivate it and keep it. (Genesis 2:8, 15)

“Garden” means an enclosure or a sheltered, protected place. It was a place of beauty and excellence reflecting God’s favor toward His chief creature. “Eden” means delight.

Among the many trees that grew in the garden was two of particular importance: the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Verses 10-17

Four rivers are mentioned flowing from Eden. Two are well known, the Tigris and the Euphrates. The Pishon and the Gihon are not known.

God chose a tree as the means whereby Adam could be tested. God told Adam in verse 17, “For in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die.”

Adam did eat of the tree but he did not die physically but spiritually. Dying is a separation from God and occurs the very moment man in disobedience breaks the bond of God’s love.

The first man was gifted with the freedom of will. Man is a free moral agent with the ability of choice.

Verses 18-25

Adam had the ability of speech and exercised it in giving names to the animals that God had created. God gave Adam permission to name the animals so that he would realize he was different from the animals and he could not find

a satisfying companionship with the animals. He had need of a companion like himself.

Woman created from man, is a reminder that male and female are originally one. If a man is to achieve his objectives in life, he needs the help of his mate in every way from the propagating of his kind down through the scale of his varied activities.

Woman created from the rib of man guarantees the dignity of womanhood as she is not an inferior substance but is on the same level with man as far as God is concerned.

Adam's first recorded words are found in verse 23, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Woman in Hebrew is "*Ishah*" and means "she-man." Man in Hebrew is "*Ish*."

The law of marriage, which is a Divine institution, given in verse 24 by God, is one woman was created for one man. A man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, thereby giving his full attention to his wife.

They become one personality with the other in a community of interests and pursuits. "Cleave" means to be cemented or glued to one another.

Chapter 3

This chapter is the most tragic chapter in the Bible because it is an inspired account of how sin and all evil came into this world. God had placed everything that man could wish for his well being in the beautiful Garden of Eden. Nothing was lacking.

As a test man was subjected to one prohibition. He could eat freely of all the trees of the garden except one, "the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil."

Verses 1-7

Man's freedom proved the goodness of the Creator. The one forbidden tree taught man he was to live under a law, and that law was enforced by a practical penalty of which he was mercifully warned.

The knowledge forbidden to man was of a kind that would corrupt his nature, so corrupt it, as to make man unfit, as well as unworthy to live forever with God.

The serpent was craftier than any other beast. “Crafty” carries the idea of shrewdness as well as craftiness.

Satan used the serpent to accomplish his evil purpose. Through the serpent Satan taught our first parents to doubt God’s truth and to ascribe God’s law to jealousy. (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9)

Satan addressed his temptation to the woman first because she is not naturally as strong as a man nor did she hear God’s command directly from God.

Satan began by lodging doubts in the woman’s mind concerning the reality of God’s prohibition, “You surely shall not die.” Satan also implied that God was seeking to withhold some good from mankind.

Eve saw that the tree was good for food, that it was a delight to the eye, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise.

Note: All sin falls into one of these three responses. (1 John 2:16) Eve rebelled against God and gave of the fruit to Adam and he also rebelled against God.

One bright spot appears in verse 7 when they felt shame. They had a guilty conscience. They were not past feeling in the matter of wrongdoing.

Verses 8-21

Toward God they felt fear in the place of love and they hid themselves from God’s presence among the trees of the garden.

They were already self-condemned before God called them forth to judgment. Instead of pleading for mercy they began to make excuses. Adam blamed Eve and implied that God was somewhat at fault. Eve disclaimed responsibility by blaming the serpent.

Upon the serpent God cursed him to an accursed and degraded life, “On your belly you shall go and dust you shall eat.”

Upon the woman God said He was assigning more pain in childbirth, and a place of subordination and suffering.

Upon the man God placed labor over the ground before it will produce its fruit. Man's life will be one of physical hardship. The penalty of sin was death. Yet in the midst of death, woman was given a name that means life. "Eve" means "to live." She became the mother of all human beings.

Adam and Eve fashioned garments of fig leaves to cover their nakedness. However, God made garments of skin and covered them. Today, God clothes us in His righteousness. (Revelation 7:13) The sacrifice of living animals appears to have been instituted at this time. This is where the animal skins came from. The need for sacrifice now existed.

Sacrifice is recorded throughout the Patriarchal Age without any record of its beginning, except here. Early man learned that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin."

Verses 22-24

As a result of sin, man was expelled from the Garden of Eden "to cultivate the ground from which he was taken." God stationed the flaming sword and the Cherubim to protect the garden from man trying to return to his forfeited Paradise.

At the end of time man will again dwell in unbroken fellowship with his Creator and the tree will reappear at the end of human history. (Revelation 22:2)

Chapters 4-6

After the expulsion of man from Paradise, Eve bore three sons: Cain, Abel, and Seth. Cain was the first human born into this world. His name means "to get, acquire, possession, or acquisition." To Eve, his birth may have seemed a fulfillment of the promise of Genesis 3:15. She may have thought that the man-child was the promised "seed of woman."

Eve soon gave birth to another son, which she named Abel. Abel means “breath, vapor, vanity, or transitivity.”

Eve gave birth to a third son, Seth. Seth means “placed or appointed.”

The first mention in the Bible of sacrifice is made in verses 3 and 4. Cain brought the fruit of the ground and Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and their fat portion, God accepted Abel’s offering and rejected Cain’s.

The attitude of the worshiper is always important in the Biblical doctrine of sacrifice. Abel’s offering was accepted because it was given “by faith” while Cain’s offering was rejected because it was not offered in the right spirit.

Cain’s second sin was anger and a fallen countenance (face). God gave Cain an opportunity to repent if Cain would lift his countenance, change his attitude and actions. Since Cain was unwilling, sin was crouching at the door like a wild beast, ready to pounce upon him and devour him.

The word “sin” is mentioned for the first time in verse 7. Sin means “missing the mark.” It comes from a bow and arrow illustration. Cain’s next sin was jealousy against his brother Abel and Cain rose up and killed his brother. 1 John 3:12 may give us a clue as to the method of murder. “Slew” in the Greek means to butcher, cut the throat.

Cain’s next sin was lying. When God asked Cain where his brother was Cain said, “I do not know.” His punishment from God was that he must live the life of a fugitive in constant terror. His greatest fear was for his life, “Whoever finds me will kill me.” God set a special mark upon him that he should not be slain. What the mark was we do not know.

Verses 16-24

Cain then directs his steps to the land of Nod, east of Eden. The word “Nod” means “wanderings,” a territory occupied by nomads or wanderers.

Many sons and daughters were born to Adam and Eve. (Genesis 5:4) Jewish tradition says 33 sons and 27 daughters. Cain would have married a relative.

Verse 17 gives us a new stage in the development of civilization, “He built a city.” The first city was named Enoch after a son of Cain.

Verse 19 is the first mention of “polygamy” when Lamech took for himself two wives. Notice that polygamy originated among those who had become separated from God.

Cain’s ancestors developed the first arts and crafts. Jabal was the originator of the pastoral life. Jubal was the originator of instrumental music. Tubal-Cain was a forger, a blacksmith, of all implements of bronze and iron.

Verses 23-24

The first recorded pieces of poetry quoted in the Bible.

Lamech was a braggart with an almost unbelievable defiance of God. Lamech threatens that by the strength of his own weapons he will extract a vengeance of seventy-seven fold.

Verses 25-26

The birth of Seth marks a fresh start, “Another seed appointed (set in place of) instead of Abel.” (Chapter 4:25)

In the days of Enosh (Seth’s sons) men began to call upon the name of the Lord. This is the first record of public worship. Men worshiped the God of Israel before Israel comes into being as a distinct people.

Chapter 5

Verses 1-32

Chapter 5 gives us the descendants of Seth. The Bible gives us no more information about Cain since Seth is the lineage to the Messiah.

Adam lived 930 years and died having many children.

Enoch comes on the scene seven generations after Adam.

He was the father of Methuselah. The Bible says that he walked with God for three hundred years after he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch was the first of the prophets. (Jude 1:14-15)

God rewarded Enoch's faith for when it became time to depart this earth he did not die, he was translated, taken to heaven without dying. Elijah was also translated to heaven. (2 Kings 2:11)

Methuselah died the year of the flood, at the age of 969 years. God created man with sufficient vitality to live forever, but sin caused the degeneration of the race. After sin entered the world the life span of man dropped steadily to seventy years. (Psalm 90:10)

Chapter 6

Verses 1-4

The wickedness of man developed to the point where Divine judgment in the form of the flood was inevitable. The race of Seth became infested with the vices of the Cainites.

The "sons of God" were the godly, or men of the lineage of Seth and the "daughters of men" were the wicked, or women of the lineage of Cain." A mingling of the two races took place that resulted in the thorough corruption of the Sethites, who falling away plunged into the deepest abyss of wickedness.

The "one hundred and twenty years" refers to the period of time set aside for repentance.

The name "*Nephilim*" means "fallen ones." The union between the Sethites and the Cainites produced a race of physical strength and courage. (Numbers 13:33) It seems that the antediluvian world had reached a desperate pitch of wickedness involved in lust and brutal outrage. (Jude 1:14-15)

Verses 5-8

God is described as being grieved that man continues to sin in spite of His mercy. The "Lord was sorry" that He had made man does not imply a change in His Divine nature. God always loves righteousness and hates evil. When man turns from righteousness to evil he experiences the wrath which is God's normal reaction to sin. For this the "Lord was sorry."

God resolved to destroy the existing race of living creatures. Righteous Noah was spared and through him humanity was to find a new beginning. The name “Noah” means rest or comfort.

Noah is described as a just man, righteous, blameless, and walked with God. Noah had three sons: Japheth, Shem, and Ham. Shem seems to have been the older with Ham the youngest. (9:24; 10:21)

Verses 13-22

Perhaps at the beginning of the 120 years God revealed His plan to Noah, bidding him to prepare an ark to save his family. Noah’s preaching did not produce any converts. The warning goes unheeded only plunging men into greater carelessness.

Noah’s ark was a kind of covered raft, built of gopher wood (Cyprus wood light and durable). The ark was 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, with three decks that reached a height of 45 feet. Around the top of the ark was a window (*Toshar*—Hebrew meaning light) designed to let in air and light. The ark was covered inside and out with pitch to make it watertight.

Note: A cubit is about 18 inches—the distance from finger tip to the elbow.

The ark consisted of a number of nests or small compartments (verse 14—rooms). Inside the area was equivalent to about 527 railroad boxcars. There was ample room on the ark for all living types of animals and their food. Remember the ark was not a ship but a large floating box with no steering or propulsion.

The creatures came voluntarily to Noah to be kept alive in the ark. Sustenance was not going to be provided miraculously. Noah had to put food on the vessel. Remember, all were vegetarians.

Chapter 7

Verses 1-5

God graciously invited Noah and his family to enter the ark that was designed to provide safety in the hour of judgment.

Seven pairs of the clean animals were brought into the ark to be used for sacrifices offered as soon as Noah and his family leave the ark and for keeping the offspring alive on the earth.

Verse 4

It took about seven days to load the ark.

Verses 6-12

Eight persons were saved from the flood and in a figure were baptized by its waters. (1 Peter 3:21) They were baptized by its waters in the sense that they were separated from the polluted life of the old world and the beginning of new lives.

God flooded the world by the fountains of the great deep bursting open and the floodgates of the sky opening. Subterranean waters poured forth from the earth's interior. Many of the earth's geological formations could have come into being as a result of the rupture. (Psalm 104:4-9)

In verse 12, the Hebrew word used for "rain" is *geshem* and is most often used to mean the autumn rains.

Verses 13-24

God closed the door of the ark and it rained forty days and nights. The mountains were covered with water 22 ½ feet above their highest peak. All flesh died, birds and cattle and beasts and swarming things outside the ark. Apparently all the fish and water life survived.

The water prevailed upon the earth for 150 days before it began to subside.

Chapter 8

Verses 1-5

God had not forgotten Noah. He caused a wind to pass over the earth and closed the fountains of the deep and the floodgates of the sky. On the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat. Ararat is located in the mountains of Armenia. It is not the name of a

mountain but of a district. These mountains rise to 17,260 feet above sea level and the summit is covered with eternal snow.

The hand of God brought the ark to rest on an area level enough that the ark did not tilt causing the animals to be destroyed but rested where it was easy to get the animals off the ark. The Armenian region was also a very fertile, lush area.

It was more than two months after the ark came to rest on Mount Ararat before the tops of the mountains began to appear. Noah waited forty days before he sent out a raven that did not return to the ark.

He sent out a dove later that returned to the ark because it found no resting place. Seven days later he sent the dove out again and it returned with an olive branch in its bill. Seven days later he sent the dove out again and it did not return proving that the waters had finally subsided. Noah spent 370 days in the ark.

The first thing Noah did when the ark was emptied was to build an altar and offer a sacrifice of every clean animal and every clean bird.

God promised He would not again curse the ground on account of man and that He would not again destroy every living thing by a flood. As long as the earth remains, seasons and day and night shall not cease. This may have been the beginning of seasons for prior to this time the earth had a stable uniform temperature.

(Scientists believe that the earth tilted 23 degrees during this time causing the different seasons.)

Chapter 9

Verses 1-7

God gave Noah and his family the same command He gave Adam and Eve, “Be fruitful and multiply,” and that the inferior creatures should be subject to them. To this God added the use of animals for food. But certain restrictions were added. The blood was not to be eaten because the blood is the life.

z A new law was enacted against murder. Human society must function in a framework of law. Civil authority was recognized.

Verses 8-17

The rainbow was made a token or sign of the fact that God would remember His covenant of grace with Noah. Mankind, birds, cattle, and beasts were made a part of this covenant. (A covenant is not an agreement or compact. God states the conditions and man accepts and enters the covenant relationship.)

The Old Covenant and the New Covenant are examples of God's covenant with mankind.

Verses 18-29

Noah planted a vineyard and drank of the wine and became drunk, uncovering himself inside his tent. (Leviticus 18:7-8, 20:11)

Ham, Noah's son, looked upon his father's nakedness and then went and told of his father's shame as if something humorous. Then Shem and Japheth, men of a pure mind, took a garment and walking backwards covered up their father.

Upon Noah's awakening he pronounced a curse upon the descendants of Ham and a blessing upon Shem and Japheth. The curse was that Canaan (Ham) was to become a slave race to his brethren. (Joshua 9:23)

Shem's blessing was that through his descendants Christ was to come. Shem's lineage became Israel God's chosen people to bring about the Messiah.

Japheth's blessing was that he was to become the ancestor of the European nations that stretched across Asia Minor into Europe, moving north and west, and later to America.

Shem's name means "fame." Japheth's name means "enlargement," and Ham's name means "servant."

The curse upon Canaan (Ham) was not the slavery of the Negro race as some religions state for not all Canaanites were black skinned. Japheth was to dwell in the tents of Shem, which was fulfilled in the acceptance of the Gentiles into

the body of Christ. This was fulfilled as a result of the Shemites, the children of Israel's rejection of Jesus. (9:27)

Noah died about 58 years before the birth of Abraham.

Chapter 10

Verses 1-32

This chapter is the history of the nations that descended from the sons of Noah. The dispersion began at the mountains of Armenia and came about because of God's command to fill the whole earth.

The great rivers were the main arteries of transportation. The valleys were extremely fertile. As a result they dispersed south and east along the rivers.

In verses 8-9, Nimrod is the founder of Babel and Ninevah as well as other cities. He is also called a "mighty hunter." The word Nimrod means, "let us revolt." The tendency of this Cushite must have been to rise up against, and to attempt to overthrow all existing order.

"Mighty hunter" does not refer to hunting wild animals but means "tyrant." The Hebrew word *gibbor* also means "despot."

Shem's name appears last even though he is the older son because it was Moses' custom to dispose first of the matters less relevant to his purpose.

The Bible from this point forward is concerned almost exclusively with the Shemites. Bible history is now concerned with Shem and his descendants.

Verse 24

Uses the phrase, "father of all the children of Eber." Eber means Hebrews, Shem is the "father of all the Hebrews."

Chapter 11

Verses 1-9

In the days of Peleg the earth was divided. (10:25) It would have been about one hundred years after the flood until the Tower of Babel. It is estimated that the human race would have grown to about thirty thousand people. This is

calculated on the assumption that each family ordinarily had about eight children.

The purpose in their building the city and the tower was to make for them a name and to keep from being scattered over the face of the earth. They desired the strength that comes in unity, but a unity without God.

God defeated the builders by confusing their language so they could not understand one another's speech. Thus, began the different languages of men.

The word "Babylon" or "Babel" in the Hebrew language means organized opposition to God.

Verses 10-26

These verses contain the records of the generations of Shem.

The family of Tersah worshiped idols. (Joshua 24:2) When Abram, Sarai, Terah, and Lot left Ur to go to the land of Canaan they first settled in Haran, about half way between Ur and Canaan. They lived there about 60 years before Abraham's father dies.

In Ur, Abraham's family worshiped the moon god "Sin." The moon god's wife was goddess "Charran." Sarai and Abram were half-brother and half-sister to each other. They had the same father but not the same mother. (20:12)

Chapters 12-16

Introduction

The first eleven chapters considered the universal history of mankind. Chapter 12 begins to narrow down the history of the kingdom of God by focusing in on Abraham and his "seed"—Christ.

God calls Abram to leave his country and his father's house because they were infected with idolatry and Abram appears to worship the true God.

Chapter 12

Verses 1-9

God called Abram to a life of pilgrimage and Abram did not know specifically where he was going, except that it was to Canaan. God promised Abram a sevenfold reward for going.

Abram would be blessed as a great nation: bless your great name; be a blessing; bless those who bless you; I will curse those who curse you, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

God gave Abram a land promise and a seed promise. Ishmael, the son of Hagar and Esau were exceedingly numerous as well as his “seed promises” by Jacob. Then there was the “spiritual seed,” followers of Jesus Christ.

God blessed Abram due to his gracious worship of God. When all goes well with him, the things he undertakes thrive, and true success crowns all his endeavors.

Abram’s name became great. He is called “the father of a multitude” (Genesis 17:5), “a prince of God” (Genesis 23:6); “the man in God’s confidence” (Genesis 18:17-19); “a prophet” (Genesis 20:17); “the servant of God” (Psalm 105:6); and “the friend of God” (Genesis 20:7).

Abram lived his life in such a way that others were blessed by it and whoever wished Abram well God would bless. God cursed those who cursed Abram because Abram was so closely identified with the good work of God, that to curse Abram comes to be almost the equivalent of cursing God.

The promised blessing to all families of the earth was the promised Savior. To receive all these blessings from God, Abram had to respond in faith and trust to God’s calling him away from his land and family.

The land of Canaan was not occupied during Abram’s time by his followers because the “iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full.” God gave the land to Abram’s offspring during the time of Moses.

Verses 10-20

Famine drives Abram out of Canaan and into Egypt where the Nile River overflows each year fertilizing and watering the land. While in Egypt, Abram lied to the Pharaoh about his relationship to his wife claiming Sarai was not his wife but a sister. To keep Pharaoh from taking Sarai as his wife God struck Pharaoh with a plague to keep Pharaoh from approaching Sarai, thus safeguarding the mother of the “seed promise.”

Pharaoh recognized that he had been “reproved” by God. (Psalm 105:14-15)

Chapter 13

Verses 1-7

Abram left Egypt and travels back through Palestine to his old encampment near Bethel, where he again established the worship of God.

Separation from Lot is necessary because he is not suited to be an integral part of the chosen people.

Verses 8-13

Abram avoids a quarrel by giving Lot his choice of the land he wanted to settle on. Lot chose the plain, or “circle of Jordan”—an exceptionally fertile area that included Sodom and Gomorrah at the southern tip of the Dead Sea. His choice included fertile fields and large prosperous cities.

Verses 14-18

Abram needs a little encouragement and God comes to him and promised him the land of Canaan. Remember: GOD REWARDS THOSE WHO TRULY SERVE HIM. In verse 16, God challenges Abram’s faith by giving him a rich promise, “Your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth.”

Chapter 14

Verse s 1-12

The kings of the city-states at the southern tip of the Dead Sea were overcome by a confederacy of eastern kings, who forced them to pay annual taxes. This

area was fruitful and prosperous before the cataclysm that destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and the “cities of the plain.”

After paying taxes for twelve years, Sodom and her allies decided to refuse payment. This was interpreted as rebellion.

After conquering the nations to the east and south, the four kings invaded the territories of the five and joined battle with them in the valley of Siddim, which was full of tar pits.

The tar pits were holes from which bitumen had been excavated. Expecting to use this terrain to confuse the enemy, the kings of the area suffered a defeat there. The eastern confederacy took whatever they wished as booty and departed. The booty included slaves as well as Lot.

Verses 13-16

The news was brought to Abram, who with his Amorite allies, and 318 men of his household rescued Lot, with all the spoil.

Verses 17-24

After receiving the thanks of the king of Sodom for his services, Abram also receives a blessing from Melchizedek, the king of Salem. Salem is Jerusalem, a city of peace, and Melchizedek is king of the city-state of Salem, or peace.

The word “priest” first appears in Scripture in the account of Melchizedek. Melchizedek bore a title that the Jews would use and bore gifts that recall to Christians, the Lord’s Supper.

The royal priesthood of Melchizedek is seen as a type of the Messianic priesthood, as Christ is also a priest-king.

The bread and wine were tokens of friendship and hospitality. Abram’s payment of tithes was a further recognition of Melchizedek’s priesthood.

The king of Sodom wanted Abram to keep the spoil that was rightfully Abram’s but he declined. Abram was not greedy. He recognized that his riches were a trust from God.

Chapter 15

Verses 1-11

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision to assure him of his blessings and protection. Abram is yet childless so God defines His promise more preciously by saying that Eliezer would not be his heir but an heir would come from his own body and be as numerous as the stars in the sky.

In verse 6 “believe” is used for the first time in the Scriptures. Abram knew it was humanly impossible for him to have a child in his old age but he believed, or trusted God that it would happen.

Also in verse 6 the word “righteousness” appears which means measuring up to the demands of God.

Verses 12-21

Some specifics of the covenant between God and Abram are:

1. The bondage of the Hebrews in a strange land for 400 years. (Verse 13)
2. Their delivery with great wealth and amid judgments on the oppressors. (Verse 14)
3. Their return to the Promised Land in the fourth generation when the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet completed. (Verse 16)

In verses 18-21, God enumerates the land area of His promise.

Chapter 16

Verses 1-6

Years pass and Abram and Sarai were perplexed and perhaps a bit impatient that they were childless. Sarai gave Abram her handmaid Hagar, an Egyptian, for his concubine, and Hagar bore him a son, Ishmael.

The name Ishmael means, “God hears.”

Verses 7-16

In verse 12, God said Hagar's son would be "a wild donkey of a man." This was not an insult; it is based on the free and roving character of the wild donkey. The Arabs always resist the encroachments of civilization and maintain a position of independence before their brethren. Abram was 86 years old when Ishmael was born.

Chapter 17

Verses 1-8

Chapter 17 deals again with God's covenant with Abram. "*El Shaddi*" is the Hebrew word for God Almighty. The meaning of "*Shaddi*" is deal violently, but in reference to God it means to display power.

The difference between this covenant and the earlier covenant is that God specifies a personal relationship with Abram to protect, bless, and magnify his descendants. As a sign of the promise God changes Abram's name to Abraham, "father of a multitude."

In verses 7-8 God says He is establishing an "everlasting covenant" with Abraham. "Everlasting," *Olam* in Hebrew, means "age lasting" not eternal.

Verses 9-14

The sign of the covenant between God and Abraham was the rite of circumcision. The ones unwilling to be circumcised were cut off from all the benefits of the covenant, while the stranger who received circumcision was admitted to the covenant.

Circumcision was to be performed on every male child the eighth day after birth, on slaves that were purchased, and all the family of Abraham was at once brought within the covenant.

Every male Jew was a member of the people of God by virtue of birth. By circumcision he was made aware of his covenant obligations and received a perpetual badge or reminder of these obligations.

Ishmael would have been thirteen years old when circumcised. Arabs today circumcise their males at thirteen years of age because of Ishmael.

Verses 15-21

The name of “Sarai” was changed to “Sarah.” Sarah means princess or princely one. She is to be the mother of nations.

Verse 17 says Abraham fell on his face and laughed. “Falling on his face” is an act of worship and adoration. His laughter is the laughter of joy and surprise.

Ishmael received a blessing from God in that he would be the father of a great people with twelve princes. But the specific line of the covenant promise would be realized in a son of Sarah to be named Isaac. The name “Isaac” in Hebrew means laughter, from the utterance of his father’s feelings on the announcement. Isaac is called “the child of the flesh” by Paul in Galatians 4:21-31.

Verses 23-27

Abraham immediately accepted God’s word and covenant. Ishmael and all the men of Abraham’s household received the rite of circumcision.

Chapter 18

Verses 1-8

Abraham is sitting at the tent door in the heat of the day when three men appear before him. One of these visitors is identified as the Lord. This no doubt was the “Angel of God—the Word of God”—Jesus Christ. (John 8:56)

Verses 9-15

Sarah laughed when she heard the promise of a son thinking she was too old to bear a child. But the Angel of the Lord rebuked her and repeated the promise of a son within a year.

Verses 16-33

Because of Abraham's position in the Divine purpose, God determined to reveal to him the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding territory. Abraham tried to intercede for such sinners. He tried to obtain a pardon for the cities, bargaining with God.

Abraham argues for the sparing of the city if there were fifty righteous men to be found living there. The Lord agrees and the bargaining continues—45, 40, 30, 20, and 10 righteous men. The Lord agrees, but there are not even ten righteous men in Sodom. Its destruction is imminent.

Chapter 19

Verses 1-11

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a reminder of the final overthrow of the wicked—the final judgment, the deliverance of the righteous.

Two angels go to Sodom and to Lot, who was sitting in the gate. The “gate” of the city served as a kind of city hall where the official business of the city was transacted. Men gathered there to discuss the problems of the day.

The angels accepted Lot's offer of hospitality and were soon the objects of the sinful desires of the men of Sodom. To protect his visitors from molestation, Lot offered his own daughters to satisfy the lust of the Sodomites. The laws of hospitality demanded that guests be protected while under Lot's roof.

Verses 12-22

Lot was warned to prepare to leave Sodom. Lot's daughters and sons-in-law were alerted but the sons-in-law despised the warning being typical men of Sodom. Lot was reluctantly dragged with his wife and two daughters from the city fleeing to a nearby city of Zoar.

Verses 23-29

God used fire and brimstone to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah. “Overthrow” in verse 25 bears the idea of proud men and institutions being brought low by the Lord who “throws down the mighty from their seats.”

Lot’s wife looked back at Sodom and was turned into a pillar of salt. Her heart was in Sodom and she was judged with Sodom. Almost escaped, she allowed her vigilance to relax. She becomes a warning to all who do not make a clear-cut break with the life of wickedness.

Verses 30-38

The history of Lot is ended. His sinful compromise with the men of Sodom bears fruit in the attitude of his daughters. Childless and widowed, they determine to have illicit relations, incest, with their father in order to bear children.

Lot permitted himself to become intoxicated on two successive nights, in which the plans of his daughters were realized. From this indulgence in incestuous passion sprang the races of the Moabites and the Ammonites.

Chapter 20

Twenty years have passed between the time that Abraham had lied to Pharaoh and the time of this lie. Abraham lied concerning his marital relations to Sarah. This showed a lack of faith on Abraham’s part concerning God’s promise to him.

Verses 1-7

After a long residence at Mamre, Abraham pulled up his residence and moved to Gerar. Here the Philistines had already started to form settlements and a warlike king named Abimelech reigned in the valley. In verse 3, God gives a message to Abimelech who had taken Abraham’s wife, “for she is married.” “Married” means governed by a husband. The Hebrew *beulath* literally means, “lorded over by a lord.” To take men’s wives from them for one’s self is a deed involving guilt.

The word “prophet” appears here for the first time and is applied to Abraham. A “prophet” is a spokesman for God; one who speaks in behalf and in the name of Deity.

Verses 8-18

Abimelech properly rebuked Abraham for lying. Abraham then offered three excuses for his lie.

1. Abraham thought there was no fear of God in Abimelech and his people and that they would kill him to obtain his wife. (Verse 11)
2. He also said he was not speaking a verbal untruth for Sarah was really his sister, the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother. (Verse 12)
3. The third excuse was that it was a pre-arranged agreement when their wanderings first began.

The people of Abimelech respected the sanctity of marriage. He gave Sarah back to Abraham along with many sheep, oxen, and servants. He also permitted Abraham to settle wherever he wanted to in the valley. One thousand pieces of silver were given as an appeasement or as a “covering of the eyes.”

Abraham then prays to God that God might bless Abimelech and his household. This ends on a note of consideration and forgiveness.

Chapter 21

Verses 1-7

The long awaited hope of a son is finally fulfilled. Isaac is born when Abraham is one hundred years old.

Verses 8-21

It was a custom of the Orient to hold a feast at the time of the weaning, sometimes as late as in the third year. Instead of a time of joy, Sarah was sad. She had seen Ishmael mocking her son Isaac. She asked Abraham to drive out Hagar and Ishmael.

The Nuzu Tablets of that time indicated that a son of the wife takes precedence over the son of a handmaid in the matter of inheritance.

Abraham was distressed because Ishmael was very dear to him prior to the birth of Isaac. Ishmael would have been about seventeen or eighteen years old when driven out.

Ishmael and Hagar depart into the wilderness near Beersheba. Fearing death by starvation and thirst, Hagar wept, but God gave her assurance of His promise and revealed a fountain of water. The growth of Ishmael in the wilderness of Paran and the marrying of an Egyptian girl indicated that he had reached maturity by this time.

Abraham still had an area of grievance in that Abimelech's servant had seized one of Abraham's wells. Abimelech assured Abraham of his ignorance concerning the seizure of the well. Abraham offered Abimelech seven ewe lambs as a witness that Abraham had rights to the disputed well.

Chapter 22

Verses 1-8

In this chapter we deal with Abraham's supreme test and the supreme victory.

The offering of his son was Abraham's most difficult and heart-rending test of faith.

Isaac is believed to be about twenty-five years old. There was absolute obedience and unquestionable trust in God in the form in which Abraham's test is presented. Abraham's obedience was demonstrated in actions rather than words. He set off for the land of Moriah to sacrifice his son.

Abraham's faith in action concerning his son can be seen as follows:

1. "We will return." (Verse 5)
2. "Arose and went." (Verse 3)
3. "Raise his son." (Hebrews 11:17-19)
4. "God will provide." (Verse 8)

5. “Stretched out his hand.” (Verse 10)

Moriah is where Solomon built the temple. It is now the site of the Moslem mosque known as the Dome of the Rock.

Verses 9-19

Abraham prepared the sacrifice and laid his son upon the wood. Abraham raised his hand to slay his son, but the Angel of the Lord told him not to stretch out his hand against the lad. Then God provided a ram caught in the thicket to be the sacrifice.

In verse 17, “possess the gate of their enemies” is a reminder that the “gate” was the key point in the control of the city, “to possess the gate” was the equivalent of gaining control of or capturing a city.

Child sacrifice was common in the Canaanite religion. Moloch worship demanded the offering of humans. This apostasy continued to the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Chapter 23

Verses 1-16

After Abraham’s sacrifice his life tapers off gradually toward the conclusion. Sarah’s death at the age of 127 was a cause of sincere grief to Abraham. Sarah is the only woman whose age and death is recorded in the Bible.

“Mourn” in verse 2 means to beat the breast, to lament, weeping. A quick burial was necessary because they did not embalm.

Since Abraham owned no land, he asked for and purchased a burial site from the sons of Heth. The Cave of Machpelah became the burial place of Abraham. Eight shekels was a year’s wage. Abraham pays 50 years of wage for the burial site.

Chapter 24

After the burial of Sarah, Abraham returned to Beersheba. His last care was for the marriage of his son Isaac to a wife of his own relative. Isaac was forty years old when he marries. (Genesis 25:20)

Verses 1-9

Isaac is unmarried and no suitable wife could be found among the Canaanites. Abraham sent a servant to Haran to find a suitable wife from among Abraham's family. The servant is not named but is believed to be Eliezer. (Genesis 15:2)

Verses 10-60

In the servant's prayer he proposed a test to find the right lady. If one, being asked for a drink of water, would not only provide water for the servant but also for his camels, she would be the one God had provided.

Rebekah, the granddaughter of Nahor and the daughter of Bethuel came to the well, as the servant was praying and her words and actions conformed perfectly to the pattern that would provide evidence of God's guidance.

Abraham's servant gave Rebekah a nose ring, bracelets, jewels and garments expressive of the wealth and generosity of Abraham and Isaac. Presents were also given to Rebekah's mother and brother. Presents are known in the Hebrew language as *mohar* and were a kind of compensation to the family for the loss of the daughter.

Ancient Jewish writings suggest "ten months to a year" as time during which Rebekah's departure might be delayed. Abraham's servant was anxious to depart and Rebekah agreed to leave immediately.

Verses 61-67

Upon learning that her prospective husband was in the field she veiled herself. When he arrived, he took Rebekah to his mother's tent, according to custom, and the marriage was completed. After their marriage love grew between them.

Chapter 25

Verses 1-11

These verses deal with Abraham's last days and deals with the disposing of Abraham's property before his death.

The statement that Abraham took Keturah as a wife does not necessarily imply that this event followed the death of Sarah. This marriage gave rise to the Keturahite Arabs.

Keturah was a concubine (1 Chronicles 1:32) and her sons were sent eastward enriched with presents, as Ishmael had been during Abraham's life, lest the inheritance of Isaac should be disputed.

"Keturah" means wrapped in clouds of incense smoke. Keturah's sons as mentioned in verse 2 are recognizable as the tribes of the north Arabian Desert. The Midianites were nomads who are frequently mentioned in Scripture. Shuah is the family of one of Job's friends, Bildad, the Shuhite. (Job 2:11)

After a full life of 175 years, Abraham died and was buried by Isaac and Ishmael in the cave of Machpelah. Ishmael survived Abraham by 50 years and died at the age of 137. The promises made to Abraham are now transferred to Isaac.

Verses 12-18

In these verses the lineage of Ishmael is disposed of before the focus of attention shifts to Isaac.

Verses 19-34

The Bible depicts Isaac as the transition figure connecting Abraham and Jacob.

Rebekah like Sarah, is at first childless. But, Isaac prays to God and Rebekah becomes pregnant. However, she is puzzled by her pregnancy and she prays to God concerning the struggle within her womb. God's answer to her was:

1. Rebekah is to be the mother of twins who will become the leaders of two separate nations.
2. The one nation shall be stronger than the other and the older son would serve the younger son.

At the birth of the twins, Jacob had a hold of Esau's heel, symbolizing that Jacob would take hold of his brother's birthright and blessing, and supplant Esau as the family heir.

Esau was born ruddy and hairy and become a rough, wild hunter. The name Esau means "red and hairy." The smooth Jacob was a quiet man of the tent. Jacob's name means, "one who takes by the heel, the supplanted."

Esau became a lover of the outdoors and was particularly loved by his father. Jacob was the quiet tent dweller and appealed more to his mother.

The "birthright" involved both spiritual and material elements. Concerning the material things, the firstborn could anticipate a double portion of the property that would be divided among his father's survivors.

Concerning the spiritual things, the "birthright" would give the firstborn the right of being the head of the family, its prophet, priest, and king. No one could renounce such privileges, except as a sacrifice required by God, without despising God who gave them.

More than this, Esau would have been the head of the chosen family and would have received the blessings of Abraham that in his "seed" all families of the earth would be blessed.

Esau was a profane man, worldly, living according to the dictates of the senses, who despising his birthright, putting himself out of the sacred family and so became a "profane person."

Chapter 26

Verses 1-11

Palestine often suffered from periodic famines. Isaac was commanded to go to Gerar, to Abimelech for food. Abimelech means “my father is king” or “my father is Moloch.” Moloch was a Canaanite deity who was worshiped by human sacrifice. Moloch was like a combination of man and bull.

The forelegs became a grate that was heated white-hot and then small children were placed on the grate and burned to death.

Abimelech was a title by the dynasty rather than a personal title. It could be compared to the title “Pharaoh.”

Isaac lied to Abimelech saying that Rebekah was his sister but Abimelech looked out the window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah and sees the deception and charges no man to touch Rebekah.

Verses 12-35

Abimelech’s conduct was outstanding. He guaranteed protection to Isaac and Rebekah. They were able to remain in the Philistine country where their crops prospered. Flocks and herds multiplied until the Philistines envied Isaac and family. Abimelech ordered Isaac to leave his district and Isaac did so settling in the valley or “wady of Gerar.”

The “wady” is a riverbed that in the rainy season is a rushing stream, but in the dry summer is either a mere trickle of water or else entirely dry.

Isaac’s servants dug wells that had been stopped up by the Philistines after Abraham’s death. The “flowing water” of verse 19 is water from a spring, not stagnant water that may come from a cistern.

Esau’s marriages are in harmony with his attitude of despising his birthright. Intermarriage was contrary to the principles exemplified by Abraham. Judith and Basemath are “Hittites.” It was the Hittite wives who introduced heathen alliances into the chosen family.

Chapter 27

Verses 1-29

Isaac hands down the blessings of Abraham to another generation. Abraham's blessing was binding even though orally pronounced. It was an irrevocable act of patriarchal power. Isaac and Esau prepare a feast of venison for the occasion.

While Esau was hunting venison to prepare for his father, Rebekah determined to secure the blessing for Jacob. She prepared the meal and disguised Jacob so that he would smell and feel like his brother Esau. Isaac, because of his poor eyesight, was a little suspicious at the sound of the voice but he felt Jacob's hands and neck that had been covered with the goat's skin and decided his suspicions were unfounded. In verse 26, Isaac even asked for a kiss.

Isaac's blessing meant for Esau was pronounced upon Jacob. The "dew of heaven" and the "fatness of the land" were assigned to Jacob. The "dew" was essential for vegetation in Canaan and its presence speaks of God's blessings. The "fat" is a symbol of prosperity, as leanness speaks of poverty.

Isaac could have been wrong in attempting to give Esau the blessing because he would not have been ignorant of God's decree about the sons before they were born.

Verses 30-46

Esau returns from his hunt and prepares the savory food and brings it to his father to receive the blessing only to find that Jacob had already received it, and he trembled violently, weeping. (Hebrews 12:17)

Esau received a temporary blessing. He would live by the sword away from the fertility of the earth and the dew of heaven. Esau would also serve his brother for a time.

Esau desired to kill Jacob but Rebekah hears of the plot and sent Jacob to stay with her brother Laban until Esau's anger subsided. Rebekah never saw her favorite son again. More than twenty years pass before Jacob returns to Canaan.

Chapter 28

Verses 1-9

Isaac directs Jacob to go to the house of Bethuel and take for himself a wife. Esau hears of his father's blessing upon Jacob and decides to seek revenge.

He knew that the daughters of Canaan displeased his father so he went and married Mahalath, the daughter of Ishmael. Ishmael's daughter is now mixed with two wild tribes.

Verses 10-22

On Jacob's way from Beersheba to Haran, he spent the night near the city of Luz (Bethel). Using a stone for a pillow, while sleeping he was visited by God in a dream. A ladder was set on earth with its top reaching to heaven. Angels of God appeared, ascending and descending on the ladder.

Although a fugitive in a foreign land, Jacob learned that heaven was not far off.

God was desirous of calling the wanderer to fellowship with Him. The way to fellowship with God is open to all who avail themselves of His grace. The symbol of God's providence was crowned by a vision of God appearing at the top of the ladder where He renewed the covenant of Abraham to Jacob.

Jacob awakes to acknowledge the presence of God by setting up a memorial. He named it Bethel (house of God). Jacob vowed to yield his life and a tenth of his possessions to God.

The date of this turning point in Jacob's religious life is believed to have occurred when Jacob was about seventy-seven years old. Up until this time religion did not seem to play a big part in Jacob's life.

Chapter 29

Verses 1-12

Jacob arrives at the well in the region of Paddan-Aram and sees three flocks of sheep lying there, having been watered from the well. Verse 2 says that there

was a large stone on the mouth of the well. A large stone protects the mouth of the well from dust and sand.

Rachel comes to the well with her flock for she was a shepherdess. Jacob removed the large stone and watered her flock. She then invites him to her families' dwelling. Laban, her father, was Jacob's mother's brother. Laban had two daughters. The oldest was Leah who was "weak eyed" or experienced some dullness. Rachel, the younger daughter, was noted for her beauty.

Verse 20

Jacob loved Rachel and offered to serve Laban for seven years for Rachel's hand.

Laban prepared a great feast. In the evening he veiled his older daughter Leah and gave her to Jacob as his bride. Jacob accused Laban of deceit. It was not deceit, but the practice of marrying off the older daughter before the younger daughter. Laban then asked Jacob to complete the bridal week and he would give him Rachel for which he must serve seven more years.

Eight days after he married Leah, Jacob married Rachel with the understanding that he serve seven years. So he worked about fourteen years and eight days for his wives.

During those seven years, Jacob had eleven sons and a daughter. These children were born to Leah and her handmaid Zilpah and Rachel and her handmaid Bilhah. Jacob loved Rachel but hated Leah. Hated means "loved less."

The sons of Jacob and his daughter and the meaning of their names:

1. Leah
 - a. Reuben (behold, a son)
 - b. Simeon (hearing)
 - c. Levi (joined)
 - d. Judah (praise)

- e. Issachar (heir)
- f. Zebulun (dwelling)
- g. Dinah (daughter)
- 2. Zilpah (Leah's handmaid)
 - a. Gad (fortunate)
 - b. Asher (happy)
- 3. Rachel
 - a. Joseph (adding)
 - b. Benjamin (son of the right hand)
- 4. Bilhah (Rachel's handmaid)
 - a. Dan (judging)
 - b. Naphtali (my wrestling)

Jacob had more daughters but only Dinah is mentioned by name because of her rape by the Shechemites.

Chapter 30

Verses 1-13

Rachel was jealous of her sister because she bore no children for Jacob and desired to die. She then gave her handmaid to Jacob so that she might be vindicated.

Verses 14-24

Reuben found some mandrakes in the field and brought them to his mother, Leah. Mandrakes are called "love apples." The fruit is the size of a large plum, yellow in color, and full of soft pulp. The fleshy forked root of the mandrake resembles the lower part of the human body. This seems to attribute to the

aphrodisiac qualities given to the mandrake. The East still values it as a love charm.

Rachel wanted to buy the mandrakes from Leah because she is concerned about her sterility. She held the superstition that mandrakes were a remedy for her barrenness.

Rachel's bargaining for the mandrakes did not produce the desired result because Leah gave birth to two more sons and a daughter. In due time, God remembered Rachel and she bore a son and named him Joseph.

Verses 25-43

After fourteen years and the birth of Joseph, Jacob wished to become his own master and return to Canaan. God did not permit Jacob to leave because he would be returning with no possessions except his wives and family. Laban asked him to continue serving him and asked Jacob "to name his wages."

Jacob asked for a very small wage. Palestine sheep are almost white, while the goats are normally black. Jacob specified that he would accept as his wages the speckled, spotted, and black among the sheep and the speckled and spotted among the goats.

Jacob's proposal had the merit of providing a positive test of integrity. The flocks of Laban could be distinguished from the flock of Jacob at a glance. Jacob then put a three-day's journey between his flock and Laban's. This eliminated all suspicion of dishonesty. Faced with Laban's craftiness Jacob devised three methods to insure the size and quality of the flocks he desired.

1. Jacob placed streaked rods where they would be seen by the ewes. (Verse 37)
2. Jacob separated the newly born spotted lambs and kids from the rest of the flock, but so arranged them that there would be a further tendency to bear spotted young. (Verse 40)
3. Jacob devised means to secure for himself the young of the strongest animals. (Verse 41)

Jacob became exceedingly prosperous and had large flocks and many servants. God had intervened for Jacob.

Chapter 31

Verses 1-16

Jacob decided to leave Paddan-Aram because of the jealousy on the part of Laban's sons concerning Jacob's prosperity and the increasing hostility of Laban himself.

"The God of Bethel" appeared to Jacob and commanded him to return to the land of his birth. Jacob did not announce his departure but took advantage of Laban's absence to make a secret departure.

After twenty years spent in Laban's service, fourteen for his wives, and six for his livestock, Jacob and his family started on the long journey across the Euphrates to the land of Canaan.

Verses 17-35

Before they left, Rachel stole the household idols (the teraphim) of her father. The Nuzu Tablets indicate that the teraphim prove that their possessor is the proper heir of the family.

It appears that Laban had no male heir at the time Jacob first came to Paddan-Aram. When Jacob married he became Laban's heir. To keep the birthright from falling to a younger brother, Rachel stole the teraphim. Jacob was totally ignorant of Rachel's act. When Laban learned of Jacob's flight he pursued him until he reached Jacob's caravan in the mountains of Gilead. God told Laban to speak "neither good or bad" to Jacob.

Laban said that Jacob had left secretly deceiving him and that Jacob had not allowed him to "kiss my sons (grandsons) and daughters (granddaughters)" goodbye.

Verse 30

In this verse we learn the real reason why he pursued Jacob when he said, “Why did you steal my gods?”

Unknown to Jacob, Rachel hid the idols so Jacob gave Laban permission to search the camp. The Code of Hammurabi specifies that anyone who steals the property of a god or temple must die.

Laban searched the camp but he did not find the teraphim since Rachel had hid them in a little box under the camel’s saddle. When he came to Rachel seated on the camel she asked to be excused from rising because, “The manner of women is upon me.”

Verses 36-37

Jacob was angered by Laban’s excuse for searching the caravan.

Verses 38-42

Jacob described his work for Laban, saying that he did not steal any of his flock, and that Laban had changed his wages “ten times” during the twenty years of their association.

Verses 43-52

Laban, professing to be concerned about the welfare of his daughters and their children, suggested a covenant which would prevent Jacob from returning to Paddan-Aram to seek revenge for the injustices to which he had been exposed to while in Laban’s household. Jacob agreed to enter such a covenant.

The heap of stones was given a dual name, reflecting the Aramaic language of Laban and the Hebrew language of Jacob. A further name was given to the place, Mizpah (watchtower).

This meeting was concluded with a sacrificial feast of thanksgiving.

Chapter 32

Laban had appeared to challenge Jacob’s exodus, but serious trouble had been averted. Now Jacob is to encounter another challenge—Esau.

Esau had threatened the life of Jacob, so Jacob has to be concerned about Esau, would he still seek revenge?

Verses 1-21

Jacob was returning to Canaan and God's angels met him and provided a guarantee of providential blessing.

Jacob appears to be afraid of Esau because he sent messengers to Esau who lived in Edom. They bring back bad news that Esau and four hundred of his men were marching toward Jacob's camp.

Jacob made both spiritual and material preparation for the dreaded encounter.

1. The spiritual preparation. In prayer, Jacob gave evidence of humility and gratitude toward God for the blessings of the past and promise for the future.
2. The physical preparation. The camp was divided into two sections.

This was so that half might be preserved if Esau should ruthlessly fall upon one of the camps. To avoid such a disaster a series of gifts designed to appease Esau and secure his good will were made ready. 580 animals were sent as a present to Esau while Jacob tarried in the camp.

Verses 22-32

Crossing the ford at Jabbuk and alone in a solitary spot, Jacob met a "man" who wrestled him until daybreak. The "man" who suddenly appeared in the dark of the night was no mere mortal. He had the power to bless. He gave Jacob a new name, "Israel."

Jacob was convinced he had striven with God. (Hosea 12:3-4)

Jacob was taught of his own weakness by the dislocation of his thigh at the angel's touch. During his midnight ordeal, Jacob had seen God. He left with a limp and a blessing.

To this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew in the hollow of the thigh and the sciatic nerve or thigh vein. These are removed at the time the animal is slaughtered.

Chapter 33

Verses 1-20

At sunrise Jacob saw Esau and his four hundred men coming. Jacob placed those of less favor in the front to meet Esau first and the rest were reserved for the last place. It proved to be a glad reunion. Esau accepted the gift. Failure to receive the gift would have been interpreted as an insult. It was an Oriental custom to first refuse and to then accept the gift.

Chapter 34

Verses 1-31

After he arrived in Shechem a conflict with the people arose. A man named Shechem, the son of Hamar, by brute strength seized and raped Dinah, the daughter of Leah and Jacob. Desiring a permanent relationship, Hamar, Shechem's father investigated the possibilities of intermarriage. He offered the Israelites to live with them, to trade, and to acquire property.

Jacob's sons said if the Shechemites were to be circumcised they would consent to intermarriage. This was a deceitful suggestion. Shechem agreed and when the men were in a weakened condition as a result of their circumcision, Simeon and Levi, the full brothers of Dinah, entered the city and killed all the men including Hamar and Shechem. They took all their possessions as spoils.

Chapter 35

Jacob's earlier experience at Bethel was that of a fugitive seeking to escape the wrath of an angry brother. Now Jacob is a fugitive again because of the rash action of Simeon and Levi. God instructs him to return to Bethel.

Verses 1-15

Jacob instructs his people to put away the foreign gods, purify yourself, and put on clean garments. This was a repentance of the sin that had been committed by the Israelites since leaving Paddan-Aram.

God appeared to Jacob and repeated the promise made to Abraham and Isaac, which was a personal promise but now the family is represented. Jacob needed this experience at Bethel because of the difficulties with the Canaanites that resulted from the murder of Shechem and Hamor. God confirmed the promise made earlier, He assured Jacob of continued blessing.

Verses 16-29

Jacob is journeying from Bethel to Ephrath when Rachel dies in childbirth. Dying in childbirth, she named her son Ben-oni, “the son of my sorrows.” Later Jacob changed his name to Benjamin “the son of my right hand.” The right hand is the position of honor. What Jacob had said earlier came to pass in this chapter. (31:32)

Jacob encountered another problem when he dwelt beyond the tower of Eder and that was the incest of his son Reuben who forfeited his birthright. Greed as well as lust may have prompted Reuben to have sinful relations with Bilhah, his father’s concubine. Reuben, by his sinful act forfeited his right as firstborn.

Chapter 36

Verses 1-43

Since Esau is not the heir to the blessings, a promise had been given Esau. (27:39-40) Hostility existed between the Edomites and the Israelites and Israel is reminded that they are blood relatives with the descendants of Esau.

The genealogy of Esau is briefly discussed before attention is focused on God’s dealings with the lineage of the family of Jacob.

Chapter 37

Verses 1-11

Jacob's two wives and two concubines gave birth to twelve sons and a number of daughters.

Joseph, the firstborn of Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife, held a position of special honor. Favored by Jacob, Joseph became increasingly unpopular with his brothers.

When Joseph was seventeen he had brought back a bad report concerning the brothers who were pasturing sheep. In addition, a special coat, a varicolored tunic, was made by Joseph's father and given to him. A tunic is an article of clothing reaching to the ankles composed of variegated pieces. This coat marked him as one who would succeed his father as chief of the tribes.

Joseph also had two dreams that did not help the relationship with his brothers. In the first dream they were binding sheaves in the field and Joseph's sheaf rose up and stood erect and all the other sheaves gathered round and bowed down to Joseph's sheaf.

In the second dream the sun, moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to Joseph. The brothers understood the dreams to indicate that Joseph would one day hold a position of authority over them. The sun being the father, the moon being the mother, and the eleven stars were the brothers of Joseph. These dreams caused his brothers to be jealous of him.

Verses 12-24

In a nomadic or semi-nomadic society, mobility is a prime factor. To find good pastures it might be necessary to move far from a home base.

Jacob wanting to learn the welfare of his sons sent Joseph to investigate. When the brothers saw Joseph coming they decide to kill him, leaving his body in one of the pits. Reuben rescues Joseph from the pit suggesting they "shed no blood" and in the absence of Reuben, Judah suggested they sell him to a passing caravan of Midianites for twenty shekels of silver.

Twenty shekels of silver was the value of a male from five to twenty years of age. The Midianites later sell Joseph to Potiphar, Pharaoh's officer, captain of the bodyguard. "Captain of the bodyguard" can be translated "chief of the executioners." Potiphar means "the gift of Ra" the Egyptian sun god.

Chapter 38

This chapter interrupts the account of Joseph in Egypt to deal with the matter of Judah and Tamar. This incident occurred after Joseph was sold into Egypt and delays the question of "what happened to Joseph in Egypt?"

Verses 1-19

The intermarriage with the Canaanites caused much grief during Israel's history. Shua, a Canaanite woman, bore Judah three sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah.

In accordance with the marriage custom of that day, Judah selected a wife for his oldest son. A wife named Tamar was selected for Er who was wicked. The Lord required Er's life and he died without an heir.

A surviving brother-in-law was expected to marry the childless widow and the oldest son of this marriage would inherit the name and property of the deceased. (Deuteronomy 25:5) (Ruth 4:5-6)

A younger brother, Onan, was willing to marry his brother's widow, but he refused to make possible the birth of a child. The judgment of God fell upon him and he too died.

Judah was required to provide a husband for Tamar, but refused to do so. He ordered Tamar to remain a widow at the home of her father until Shelah reaches manhood. He really had no intention of permitting the marriage.

Judah's wife died leaving him a widower. Tamar learned of this and that Judah was going to Timnah, to see his shepherders. Tamar also knew that Shelah had reached maturity and that Judah had not fulfilled his promise. She decided to take things into her own hand. She would force Judah to perform the levirate duty.

Tamar assumed the garb of a prostitute consecrated to the degrading worship of Astarte. Judah saw her and asked to come in to her. He gave her a “kid of the goats” as her reward for the sinful act. She also asked for a pledge—“your seal and your cord and your staff.”

Verses 20-30

She conceived by Judah and when he sent the “kid goat” she was nowhere to be found. He did not search for the signet (seal), his bracelet (cord), or his staff because that would expose his sinful act by his investigation.

Judah had the power of life and death, so when the report came to him that Tamar was with child as a result of harlotry, he self-righteously insisted that she be brought forth and burned.

She then produced the signet, the bracelet, and the staff declaring that their owner was the father of her child. Judah acknowledged that he had been wrong in not observing the levirate marriage principal. Tamar gave birth to twin boys, Zerah and Perez.

Chapter 39

Verses 1-18

The fact that Joseph loved God and that he was destined to accomplish God’s will in Egypt, this did not cause him to be spared the terrors of false accusations and unjust imprisonment.

Potiphar was happy to find in Joseph a servant who could be entrusted with responsibility. Proving himself trustworthy, Joseph was made overseer of Potiphar’s household. The one thing Joseph was not in charge of was the food Potiphar ate because an Egyptian would consider himself defiled if he were to eat with a foreigner.

Joseph was about to face a “big test.” The physical beauty of Joseph attracted the wife of Potiphar and she prepared a sinful relationship, but Joseph refused. Joseph was seventeen when sold into slavery and is thirty when he stands before Pharaoh.

Joseph could not betray the trust that Potiphar had placed in him. “How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?” ***Genesis 39:8-9 are verses that must be the key to guiding our Christian lives.*** Potiphar’s wife continued to tempt Joseph day after day.

On one occasion, finding herself alone with Joseph, she took hold of his garment in making her sinful suggestion. Joseph escaped, leaving his garment in her hand.

Angered at Joseph’s refusal to accept her advances, she determined to punish him. She called for the men of the house who would be jealous of Joseph’s position. She spoke of Joseph as a Hebrew, making use of Egyptian racial prejudice. She also lied concerning Joseph accusing him of being the aggressor and that she had resisted his advances. Calling for help she had seized his garment as he fled.

Potiphar was angered and placed Joseph in prison. He did not sentence him to death because he may have had a suspicion of her guilt.

Verses 20-23

In prison Joseph proved to be trustworthy and was assigned a position of responsibility. The chief jailer placed Joseph over all the other prisoners.

Joseph reminds us that the righteous may suffer, but they can never escape the love of God.

Chapter 40

Verses 1-15

Some conspiracy at the court of Pharaoh led to the imprisonment of two of the king’s officers, the chief of the cupbearers and the chief of the cooks. These men were committed to Joseph’s charge. They each had a dream that perplexed them.

The chief cupbearer dreamed of a vine with three branches, the clusters of which produced ripe grapes. The cupbearer squeezed the grapes into Pharaoh’s cup and placed the cup in his hand.

Joseph interpreted the dream as meaning that the chief cupbearer would be restored to his office within three days. He asked the cupbearer to remember him when he was restored to the position of trust in Pharaoh's court.

The chief cook also related his dream in which three baskets of bread were on his head. Baked food for Pharaoh was arranged on the top basket, but the birds devoured the food in the basket. Joseph interpreted this dream. Within three days the chief cook would be decapitated and impaled on a stake, becoming food for the birds of prey. To an Egyptian, who deemed the welfare of the soul of the next life dependent on the preservation of the body, such an idea would be particularly offensive.

On the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, Pharaoh staged a feast and just as Joseph had said, the chief cook was hanged. However, the chief cupbearer, in the enjoyment of his restored position, forgot Joseph.

Chapter 41

Verses 1-13

Joseph remained in prison two full years. We do not know how long he was in prison after the chief cupbearer was restored to his office.

Pharaoh had a dream that he was standing by the Nile River and he saw coming from the Nile seven fat cows, sleek and fat, and they are upon the grass at the river bank.

Then he dreamed that seven ugly, gaunt cows ate the seven sleek and fat cows, coming up out of the Nile River.

In a second dream he saw seven plump and good ears of grain followed by seven ears, thin and scorched by the east wind.

The seven plump ears swallowed up the seven thin ears. Then Pharaoh awoke and called his magicians and wise men to interpret the dreams, which they could not.

The chief cupbearer recalled the prison episode in which Joseph had correctly interpreted his own dream and that of the chief cook.

Verses 14-15

Joseph was removed from the dungeon and brought before Pharaoh. Pharaoh told Joseph of his dreams which no one could interpret.

Verse 16

Joseph interpreted the dream of the cattle and the ears of grains as descriptive of the immediate future of Egypt. Seven years of abundance would be followed by seven years of drought.

The fat cows represented the seven years of plenty. This was the sacred symbol of Isis, the goddess of production that came up out of the Nile River, the great fertilizer of Egypt. Irrigation comes to the soil of Egypt by the annual overflow of the Nile River.

Joseph suggested to Pharaoh that he appoint an overseer in charge of the land who would be responsible to exact a fifth of the produce of the land and put it into storage to be distributed during the lean years. The proposal seemed good to Pharaoh and he appointed Joseph to oversee and serve Egypt in the impending time of crisis.

Joseph was appointed Prime Minister. The official signet ring was given to Joseph so that he could issue official edicts. Joseph was given a gold necklace by the Pharaoh and permitted to ride in the second chariot.

In verse 43, the people were told to “bow the knee.” This meant to pay attention and to fall prostrate before Joseph. In addition, Pharaoh gave Joseph a new name “Zaphenath-paneah” and gave him Potiphar’s daughter, Asenath, as his wife. She bore Joseph two sons during the years of plenty.

Verses 46-57

Asenath, the daughter of Potiphara, priest of the city of On, gave birth to two sons whom Joseph named Manasseh and Ephraim. Manasseh means, “make to

forget.” God had made Joseph forget all his trouble and his father’s household. Ephraim means “fruitful.” God made Joseph fruitful in the land of his affliction.

Chapter 42

Verses 1-18

The seven years of famine began to come. The famine even reached into Canaan to the home of Jacob. Jacob learned that grain was available in Egypt so he sent his sons to buy grain, but he kept back Benjamin. Benjamin was the only surviving son of his favorite wife, Rachel.

Joseph recognized his brothers but they did not recognize Joseph. Joseph spoke harshly and accused them of being spies. In defending themselves they told Joseph about their home, their father, and their younger brother.

Joseph insisted that the brothers bring Benjamin to him as proof of the truthfulness of their account. Getting Benjamin into his power was needed, lest Jacob’s fondness should frustrate all his plans. Their bags were filled with grain to be carried back to Egypt.

When the sons reported their Egyptian adventure to Jacob, the old patriarch experienced the bitterest sorrow. Reuben spoke to his father saying, “You may put my two sons to death if I do not return Benjamin to you.”

Chapter 43

Verses 1-15

The famine was so severe that Jacob was forced to let his sons make a second trip to Egypt for grain and Benjamin was taken along with them.

Verses 16-34

Joseph arranged to dine with them at noon. The brothers were afraid because of the money that had been restored to their sacks. Upon seeing Benjamin, Joseph was deeply stirred emotionally and entered his chamber and wept.

Then he washed his face and gave orders to serve the meal. Joseph ate by himself and the brothers by themselves because the Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews for it was loathsome to the Egyptians.

The brothers were seated by age before Joseph. They wondered how Joseph knew their age. Benjamin was given five times as much to eat as the other brothers. Joseph was testing them to see if they were enemies of their brother Benjamin, as they had once been to Joseph.

Chapter 44

Verses 1-13

Joseph was testing them when he ordered the men to fill his brother's sacks with grain and to put each man's money in the mouth of the sack. In Benjamin's sack they were to place Joseph's silver cup used for divination.

The presence of the cup would give the impression that Benjamin was a thief. The older brothers would be tested to determine whether or not they were ready to abandon Benjamin to his fate.

As they left the city, Joseph sent his house steward to apprehend them. The steward accused them of dishonesty and they insisted on their integrity. They even suggested the death penalty for the one who had the cup.

Upon searching the sacks, the divination cup was found in Benjamin's sack. The brother's tore their clothes (a symbol of deep distress and mourning) loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

The brother's chief concern was for their father. They knew that the loss of Benjamin would probably bring about Jacob's speedy death. The divination cup was filled with water. Particles of gold, silver, precious stones, or oil was added. The design formed was used in prophesying future events. It is likely that Joseph's use of the cup was a part of the disguise to remove any suspicion from his brothers concerning his identity.

Verses 14-34

Joseph expressed a willingness to dismiss the ten older brothers and keep Benjamin as his bondman. Judah offered a heart-rending plea. He recounted the sorrow of Jacob. If Benjamin were not to return it would surely result in Jacob's death. Judah offered to remain as Joseph's bondman, urging Joseph to let Benjamin return to his father.

Chapter 45

Verses 1-15

Joseph being a tenderhearted man could no longer control his emotions and he revealed himself to his brothers. He told them of God's mission for him.

The brothers were sent on their way with orders to tell Jacob of Joseph's welfare, inviting him to join Joseph in Egypt for the years of famine that remained.

Verses 16-28

Pharaoh was happy to learn that the family of his honored Prime Minister had visited Egypt. He ordered that wagons be prepared to bring Jacob and his family to Egypt. Clothing and money were provided for all with special consideration for Benjamin.

Joseph was seventeen when he was sold into slavery. Joseph was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh. The years of plenty had come to an end, seven years. Two years of famine had already passed. Adding these years together Joseph was now thirty-nine years old. He was seventeen when sold into slavery. His father had not seen him for twenty-two years.

Chapter 46

Verses 1-7

Isaac begins his journey to Egypt. He is told by God at Beersheba not to be afraid to go to Egypt. God promised to make a great nation of Jacob in Egypt. Jacob was to die in Egypt but he would be buried in Canaan.

Verses 8-27

Sixty-six persons went down into Egypt, not counting the wives of Jacob's sons.

1. The children of Leah—32.
2. The children of Zilpah—46.
3. The children of Rachel—14.
4. The children of Bilhah—7.
5. Jacob—1.

All totaled these numbers add up to 70 people.

Removing Joseph and his two sons who were already in Egypt and Jacob who was not part of the sixty-six, we arrive at 66 people.

Acts 7:14 says here were 75 people who went down into Egypt. The difference between 70 and 75 is that Stephen quotes from the Septuagint (LXX) that adds the children of Manasseh and Ephraim, 5 in all.

Verses 28-34

Joseph comes out to meet his aged father in the land of Goshen. Goshen is the best pasture land in all of Egypt. It was best suited for the semi-nomadic patriarchs.

The one reason for settling in Goshen was that the Egyptians looked down on the nomadic and considered them loathsome.

Chapter 47

Verses 1-12

Joseph tells Pharaoh of their settlement in the land of Goshen. When Pharaoh learns of their cooperation as shepherds he put Jacob's family in charge of his livestock.

Verses 13-26

Egyptians in need of food presented themselves to Joseph to explain their plight. In exchange for food, Joseph purchased their cattle, granting them an allowance of food in exchange for horses, flocks, herds, and donkeys.

When the Egyptians presented themselves a second time, Joseph secured their lands for Pharaoh in exchange for food. The purchase of land by Joseph introduced a feudal system of land tenure. Seed was allotted to the Egyptians with the understanding that one-fifth of the produce would revert to Pharaoh. The Egyptians were not happy with Joseph's edicts.

Jacob lived in Goshen 17 years and died at the age of 147.

Egypt experienced an economic disaster while the Israelites enjoyed the blessings of God.

Jacob knew he was about to die and called Joseph and made him promise not to bury him in Egypt, but to carry him back and bury him with his family. Receiving Joseph's promise to bury him in Canaan, Jacob bowed in worship at the head of the bed.

Chapter 48

Verses 1-22

When Joseph heard that Jacob was sick he took his two sons to Jacob. Joseph is not one of the tribes and he takes his sons to receive a blessing. Jacob claimed Ephraim and Manasseh for his own, placing them before Reuben and Simeon whose lust and violence had forfeited their birthright.

The adoption of Manasseh and Ephraim serves as a kind of tribute to Rachel and shows how keenly Jacob felt the loss.

Joseph sat his sons in such a way that Manasseh would be at the right hand and Ephraim at the left. But Jacob crossed his hand so that the right hand was placed on Ephraim.

When Joseph objected Jacob said that both would receive blessings but Ephraim would receive the greater blessing. That blessing would be prosperity that would make them the envy of the tribes of Israel.

To Joseph he promised one portion more than his brothers. Joseph was the heir in respect of property while the royal power was given to Judah and the priesthood to Levi.

These divisions mark the transition from the “family” to the “nation”—from the “patriarchal” to the “Mosaic.” Ephraim became the strongest of the twelve tribes. In the time of the divided kingdom, the name Ephraim was frequently used as a synonym for Israel (the Northern Kingdom).

Chapter 49

Verses 1-27

After giving Joseph his separate and special blessings for himself and his two sons, Jacob called all his sons to hear the last words of Israel, their father.

Reuben was expected to fill the honored position but he had given evidence of instability of character. His sin with Bilhah was a grave offense in Jacob’s eyes and as a result Reuben forfeited his privilege as the firstborn.

Simeon and Levi shared in the treachery against Hamar and Shechem and as a result will be divided and scattered. Simeon was absorbed into the tribe of Judah so that it lost its separate tribal experience. Levi was dispersed throughout the land with no distinct tribal inheritance.

The tribe of Judah would rule in Israel. Enemies would be subdued before him. David came from the tribe of Judah and so did Jesus.

Shiloh means, “a Man of rest” or “Giver of rest.” The tribe of Judah would culminate in a Messianic ruler who will achieve perfect rest for His people.

Zebulun is only described in his location geographically. Issachar is described as a strong donkey used for burden and fieldwork but choosing a life of ease instead of service.

Jacob prophesied that marauding tribes would press upon the tribe of Gad but Gad is seen dispersing them and pressing hard upon the heels as they retreat. Gad was among the first tribes taken into captivity.

Asher shall inherit a fertile land. He is described as prosperous and capable of producing delicacies fit for a king. Naphtali is pictured as a deer with all restraint removed. Joseph is described as a fruitful bough. Benjamin is described as having a warlike character. Benjaminite bowmen and slingers were famous.

Verses 28-33

Jacob gave instructions concerning his burial. He wished to be buried in the burial plot that Abraham had purchased.

Chapter 50

Verses 1-14

The history contained in the book of Genesis is brought to a quick conclusion after the death of Jacob. Jacob's body was mummified in accordance with the current Egyptian methods of embalming. Forty days were required to complete the embalming procedure. Receiving permission, Joseph took Jacob's body to Canaan for burial.

Verses 15-26

Joseph's brothers were afraid after their father's death that Joseph might seek revenge for their sin against Joseph.

With tears of love and disclaiming the right to judge them, Joseph left their judgment in the hands of God. Joseph said that he would provide for them and their little ones.

Joseph died at the age of 110. He was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt. Joseph's mummy case remained with the Israelites through the years of bondage, exodus, and wilderness wanderings. It remained a silent prophecy that God would one day bring the Israelites back to the land of their fathers.