

# GENESIS

## GENESIS 1 — CREATION OF THE WORLD

### CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH (V. 1)

Here are three facts. What was done? Who did it? When did it occur? Two words require explanation: "created" and "beginning." Does the former mean that heaven and earth were created out of nothing? The word (*bara*, in Hebrew) does not necessarily mean that, but its peculiar use in this chapter suggests that it means that here. It occurs three times, here in verse 1, at the introduction of life on the fifth day, and at the creation of man on the sixth day. Elsewhere, where only transformations are meant, another word (*asah*, in Hebrew) is used, translated "made." *Bara* (created) is thus reserved for marking the introduction of each of the three great spheres of existence — the world of matter, of animal life and of spirit, all three of which, though intimately associated, are distinct in essence, and constitute all the universe known to us. Professor Guyot adds that whenever the simple form of *bara* is used in the Bible it always refers to a work made by God and never by man. These considerations, with others, justify the statement that "created" here means created out of nothing.

But when was the "beginning"? The margin indicates a period about 4,000 years before Christ, but these marginal notes are not part of the divine test, but the work of uninspired minds and therefore open to debate. Should science ultimately determine on millions of years ago as the period of the creation there is nothing in this verse of the Bible it would contradict.

### MAKING DAY (VV. 2-5)

What was the condition of inert matter as represented in verse 2? The first verb "was" has sometimes been translated "became." Read it thus and you get the idea that originally the earth was otherwise than void and waste, but that some catastrophe took place resulting in that state. This means, if true, that a period elapsed between verses 1 and 2, long enough to account for the geological formations of which some scientists speak, and a race of pre-Adamite men of which others speculate. It suggests too that the earth

as we now know it may not be much older than tradition places it. The word "earth" in this verse, however, must not be understood to mean our globe with its land and seas, which was not made till the third day, but simply matter in general, that is, the cosmic material out of which the Holy Spirit organized the whole universe, including the earth of today.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." "Moved upon" means brooded over as a bird on its nest. "Waters" means not the oceans and seas as we know them, but the gaseous condition of the matter before spoken of. The Spirit of God moved "upon" the waters, and not inside of them, showing that God is a personal Being separate from His work. As the result of this brooding, what appeared? We need not suppose that God spake just as a human being speaks, but the coming forth of light out of thick darkness would have seemed to a spectator as the effect of a divine command (~~1876~~ Psalm 33:6-9). On the natural plane of things vibration is light or produces light, which illustrates the relation between the moving of the Spirit upon inert matter and the effect it produced.

"And God called the light day." The Hebrew word *yom*, translated "day," is used in five different senses in the first two chapters of Genesis. Here it means light without reference to time. Later in the same verse it means the period covered by "the evening and the morning" mentioned, the exact duration of which we do not know. At verse 14 it stands for what we know as twenty-four hours, at verse 16 it means the light part of the day of twenty-four hours, and at 2:4 it means the whole period during which the heaven and the earth were created. All this bears on the question whether creation was wrought in six days of twenty-four hours or six day-periods of unknown length; and it will be seen that one does not necessarily contradict the Bible if he believes the latter. When we recall that days of twelve and twenty-four hours were altogether excluded before the appearance of the sun on the fourth day, the latter hypothesis receives the stronger confirmation.

### **MAKING HEAVEN (VV. 6-8)**

What does God call forth in verse 6? Firmament might be translated expanse. What was it to divide? Notice that according to our definition of waters, this means a separation of the gaseous matter into which light had now come. What did God call this expanse? Heaven here means not simply the atmosphere around the earth but the greater immensity where the sun,

moon and stars are located. Related to this, read ~~HEB~~ Psalm 148 and notice that there are waters, that is, gaseous matter above the heaven of which this verse speaks, and that the waters below it include the clouds of our atmosphere as well as the oceans and seas we navigate.

### **MAKING EARTH AND SEAS (VV. 9-13)**

What command goes forth from God on the third day (v. 9)? What did He call the result (v. 10)? Heaven, or the firmament, had divided the cosmic or gaseous matter on the second day. Motion was now everywhere, and gravitation and chemical forces tended to concentrate this matter under the firmament around particular centers, one of which became our globe. A cooling process set in, shrinking and folding its surface into great wrinkles, the shrinking of some parts furnishing basins for oceans or seas and the projection of other parts bringing continents into view. Thus would astronomers and geologists comment on these verses.

But another work than the formation of the globe was accomplished on this day (vv. 11-12). A principle superior to matter begins to govern its particles, and they assume new forms. What does the earth put forth? Which came first, the plant or the seed? "The plant is not yet life," says Guyot, "but the bridge between matter and life."

### **MAKING LIGHTS (VV. 14-19)**

What command went forth on the fourth day? For what six purposes were these lights made (v. 14-15)? What discrimination is made between the two greater lights (v. 16)? Where were the lights placed (v. 17)? What special purpose of their making is emphasized in verses 17 and 18? It is well to keep in mind that light itself was made on the first day, and that these lights of the fourth day were (so to speak) light-holders. It is of course unnecessary to state how they divide the day from the night, and in what sense they are for signs and seasons, as every one knows the first result is secured by the daily rotation of the earth among them on its own axis, and the second by its annual revolution around the sun. It is presumable that originally their light was merged in that of the earth's own outer covering of light, and that as her luminous envelope disappeared they became visible, and she came to depend on them for both light and heat.

## CREATING ANIMAL LIFE (VV. 20-25)

What is the command of verse 20? The waters here referred to are our oceans and seas. The Revised Version corrects the misapprehension that fowl came forth from the water. What word in verse 21 indicates that we have now entered on a new sphere of existence? What was the nature of the blessing on the fish and fowl (v. 22)? What was the further work of creation on this day (v. 24-25)? It is interesting to note: (a) that this peopling of the water, the air and the land is in the precise order indicated by the science of geology; (b) that the plant life of the third day was the preparation for the animal life of the fifth day; (c) that the plant is now in the animal shaped into new forms, and subservient to higher functions than it could ever perform by itself; (d) that two powers which place the animal on a higher platform than the lower grades of existence are sensation, by which it perceives the world around it, and will, by which it reacts upon it. This is life, and is not the result of chemical elements left to themselves, but the effect of previously existing life. Thus, the Bible and science agree in declaring that "spontaneous generation is an untenable hypothesis," and only life begets more life.

## CREATING MAN (VV. 26-31)

What word in verse 26 suggests more than one person in the Godhead? What dignity is given to man above every other work of creation? What dignity in his position? What word in verse 27 shows that in his creation we have entered another new sphere of existence? What blessing is bestowed on man in verse 28? How does it differ from that bestowed on the lower animals? What provision has God made for the sustenance of man and beast? Note:

- (1) that the consultation in the Godhead regarding man's creation foreshadows the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity;
- (2) that the "image of God" may mean the trinity in man represented by body, soul and spirit (2:7; ~~5:12~~ 1 Thessalonians 5:23), but especially that moral image suggested in ~~5:10~~ Colossians 3:10;
- (3) that the dominion of man over the lower creation has in some measure been lost through sin, but will be restored again in Christ (~~4:8~~ Psalm 8); and

(4) that the creation of matter, of life and of man are three distinct creations out of nothing, and that God's action in them is direct, hence evolution from one into the other is impossible. There may be evolution within any one of these systems of existence considered by itself, but this is different from that other evolution which would make man the descendant of an ape and rule God out of the universe which He made.

## QUESTIONS

1. What does create probably mean in this chapter? Why do you think so?
2. When may the beginning have been?
3. What does "earth" mean in verse 2?
4. What word in verse 2 opposes pantheism by showing God to be a person?
5. If the creation days were not limited to twenty-four hours, why do you think so?
6. What does "heaven" of the second day stand for?
7. What two works were accomplished on the third day?
8. What two powers in the animal define life?
9. Quote <sup><SIC10></sup>Colossians 3:10.
10. How would you distinguish between a rationalistic and a possibly Biblical evolution?

## GENESIS 2 — THE GARDEN OF EDEN

### GOD'S SABBATH (VV. 1-3)

The first three verses of this chapter belong to the preceding as a summary of its contents. Of what day do they treat? What did God do on that day? How did He regard it? In the light of the fourth commandment, these verses seem to countenance the thought of creative days of twenty-four hours each; that is, God's Sabbath seems to be set over against man's Sabbath, but the two should not be confounded. The latter was made for man and fitted to his measure (<sup><H027></sup>Mark 2:27). Therefore while the

proportion of time may in some sense be the same, the actual time may be different.

### MAN'S NATURE (VV. 4-7)

"The generations of" in verse 4, frequently repeated in this book, forms the dividing line between the various sections of it, or as Dr. Urquhart puts it, "the heading of the various natural chapters into which the whole book was divided by its author. It refers not to what goes before but what comes after." In this case it is not the story of the heaven and the earth which we are to have repeated, but an account of the transactions of which they were to be the scene, the things which followed their creation.

Notice the new name of God used here: Lord God. The first of these words printed in capitals translates the Hebrew "Jehovah," while the second translates "Elohim." Elohim is the far-off name, that which distinguishes God as creator, hence its uniform employment until now. But Jehovah is the nearby name which distinguishes God in relation with man, the covenant-making and covenant-keeping God, hence its employment here where man is to be especially considered. Later on when both Jehovah and Elohim are used in connection with human affairs, the former seems to be generally reserved for God's dealing with His own people as distinguished from the unbelieving nations.

Verse 5 should be read in the Revised Version, where a certain condition is described and the reason is given. What were the condition and the reason? What interesting fact of natural history is stated in verse 6? It will be especially interesting to recall this when we reach the first mention of rain at the flood. Of what was the body of man formed? What did the Lord God do with the formation He had made? And what was the production of these two elements according to the last clause? Here is the starting-point of the psychology of the Bible, which seems to speak of man as a trichotomic being — having body, soul and spirit (compare <sup>1</sup>Thessalonians 5:23; <sup>2</sup>Hebrews 4:12). Tertullian, one of the early church fathers, used to call the flesh the body of the soul and the soul the body of the spirit, an opinion which has maintained among psychologists to the present. Others have called the body the seat of our sense-consciousness, the soul the seat of our self-consciousness, and the spirit the seat of our God-consciousness.

Before leaving this verse note:

- (1) that the word formed in Hebrew is practically the same as potter (<sup><810></sup>Job 10:9; <sup><2480></sup>Jeremiah 18:1-6; <sup><602></sup>Romans 9:20-21);
- (2) that the word for ground is *adamah*, which means red earth, and that from it the proper name Adam is derived; and
- (3) that the reference to the spiritual life which man received by God's inbreathing is that which is the common property of all men, and which should be distinguished from the new life in Christ Jesus which becomes the possession of those who, as fallen creatures, receive the Holy Spirit to dwell in them through faith in His name. For the common spiritual life see <sup><898></sup>Job 32:8; <sup><3127></sup>Proverbs 20:27; <sup><421></sup>1 Corinthians 2:11; and for the life of the Holy Spirit in the believer see <sup><335></sup>Ezekiel 36:26-27; <sup><650></sup>Psalms 53; <sup><3446></sup>John 14:16-17; <sup><469></sup>1 Corinthians 6:19.

### THE GARDEN LOCATED (VV. 8-14)

What name is given to the locality of the garden? In which section of that locality was it planted? What expression in verse 9 shows God's consideration for beauty as well as utility? What two trees are particularly named? Where was the tree of life planted? What geographical feature of verse 10 accentuates the historical character of this narrative? Observe how this is further impressed by the facts which follow, viz: the names of the rivers, the countries through which they flow, and even the mineral deposits of the latter. Note:

- (1) the use of the present tense in this description, showing that the readers of Moses' period knew the location;
- (2) it must have been an elevated district, as the source of mighty rivers; and
- (3) it could not have been a very luxuriant or fruitful locality, else why the need of planting a garden, and where could there have been any serious hardship in the subsequent expulsion of Adam and Eve? It used to be thought that Eden was a Hebrew word meaning pleasure, but recent explorations in Assyria indicate that it may have been of Accadian origin meaning a plain, not a fertile plain as in a valley, but an elevated and sterile plain as a steppe or mountain desert. Putting these things together, the place that would come before the mind of an

Oriental was the region of Armenia where the Euphrates and the Tigris (or Hiddekel) take their rise. There are two other rivers taking their rise in that region, the Kur and the Araxes, thence uniting and flowing into the Caspian Sea, but whether these are identical with the Pison and Gihon of the lesson can not yet be determined. Science now corroborates this location of Eden in so far as it teaches

- (1) that the human race has sprung from a common center and
- (2) that this center is the table-land of central Asia.

### **THE MORAL TEST (VV. 15-17)**

For what practical purpose was man placed in the garden (v. 15)? What privilege was accorded him (v. 16)? And what prohibition was laid upon him (v. 17)? With what penalty? Some test must be given a free moral agent by which his determination either to obey or disobey God may be shown, and it pleased God, for reasons He has not been pleased to entirely reveal, to select this test. It was an easy one in the light of Adam's condition of sinlessness and the bountiful privileges otherwise bestowed upon him: "The forbidden tree was doubtless called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil because through the eating of it mankind came to the experience of the value of goodness and of the infinite evil of sin."

The phrase "Thou shalt surely die" is translated a little differently in the margin. The nature of this death was twofold. It was a spiritual death, for "in the day" Adam ate thereof he was cast out from the garden and cut off from the communion with God theretofore enjoyed. It was physical death, for in the end Adam returned unto the dust whence he was formed. It would seem from the ensuing record that it was his exclusion from "the tree of life in the midst of the garden" which ultimately resulted in death: It seems to have existed to confer the gift of immortality, perhaps to counteract sickness, repel bodily ills of every kind, and keep the springs of activity and enjoyment preserved in abounding fullness.

### **MAN'S HELPMATE (VV. 18-25)**

What further evidence of God's consideration is in verse 18? What occurred as a preliminary to its expression (v. 19)? How does verse 20 illustrate the intelligence of Adam and in so far disprove the theory of man's ascent from a lower level than the present? Note the five steps on



God's part before the helpmate is introduced to Adam (vv. 21-22). How does Adam express his recognition of the helpmate? What name is given to her, by whom is it given, and why? Do you suppose verse 24 is the record of an expression of Adam, or a later one of Moses, the human author of this book? Of course, in either case, it is God speaking through the human agent, but which agent is it? (Compare also ~~AND~~ Ephesians 5:22-23, but especially verses 30-31.) Speaking of the formation of Eve from Adam, one of the older commentators has remarked that "she was not made out of his head to surpass him, nor from his feet to be trampled on, but from his side to be equal to him, and near his heart to be dear to him."

The last verse of the chapter indicates that in their state of innocence modesty did not require clothing as a covering for shame and that the climate of the garden did not require it for protection. Of God it is said, "Thou coverest Thyself with light as with a garment" (~~AND~~ Psalm 104:2), and some have thought that in man's state of innocence a similar shining may have served him in the same way, an outer light which he lost when sin robbed him of the inner one.

## QUESTIONS

1. What relation do the first three verses of chapter 2 bear to the preceding chapter?
2. What significance attaches to the phrase "the generations of"?
3. How would you distinguish the names of God in this lesson?
4. What is the nature of man, threefold or twofold?
5. Give some evidences of the historicity of Eden?
6. Where may it have been located, and what reasons are there for so thinking?
7. What made Adam's moral test an easy one?
8. Why was "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" probably called by that name?
9. In what two ways was the penalty executed on Adam?
10. What shows that Adam was not a savage but rather the noblest type of the race?

## GENESIS 3 — THE INTRODUCTION OF SIN

### THE TEMPTATION (VV. 1-5)

That more than the serpent was present is suggested by the speech and reasoning powers displayed, but is rendered certain by a comparison of ~~<6113>~~ Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, where the serpent is identified with Satan. Some think the serpent originally stood upright and was very beautiful to look upon, which, if true, would contribute to its power over the woman and further explain why Satan employed it as his instrument. Nevertheless, that Satan was the real tempter is additionally assured by ~~<6184>~~ John 8:44; ~~<6713>~~ 2 Corinthians 11:13; ~~<6183>~~ 1 John 3:8 and ~~<5124>~~ 1 Timothy 2:14.

Read Satan's inquiry of the woman in the Revised Version, and perceive how it differs from the words of the prohibition (2:16). How does it prove Satan "a liar from the beginning," and how does it impugn God's wisdom and love? Do you think the woman made a mistake in parleying with Satan? And how does her language (v. 3) deflect from the truth? Does she also make God a harder master than He is, and thus has sin already entered her soul?

Notice that "gods" (v. 5) is translated "God" in the Revised Version. It was in seeking to be as God that Satan fell (~~<5416>~~ 1 Timothy 3:6), and he tries to drag man down by the same means. Compare this passage with the history of the Antichrist (~~<6111>~~ 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

### THE FALL (VV. 6-7)

What three steps led to the open act of sin? How does ~~<6126>~~ 1 John 2:16 characterize these steps? Compare the temptation of Jesus for the use of the same method (~~<6104>~~ Luke 4:1-13). How does the further conduct of the woman illustrate the progress and propagation of sin? Did any part of Satan's promise come true? What part failed? Our first parents came into the knowledge of good and evil by coming to know evil to which they had been strangers before, the moral effect on them being shame (compare 2:25). What the man and woman immediately acquired was the now predominant trait of self-consciousness. God-consciousness has been lost, and henceforth self-contemplation is to be the characteristic and bane of mankind, laying the foundation for those inner feelings or mental states comprehended under the term unhappiness, and for all the external

strivings whereby effort is made to attain a better condition. What was the first of these efforts they made (v. 7, last clause)? And is not this act the germ of all subsequent human activities? Conscious of self and feeling the pressure of need, and no longer having a God to supply that need, man begins to invent and contrive (<sup><2072></sup>Ecclesiastes 7:29). Nor are these inventions of a material kind merely, but chiefly a spiritual kind, since their effort to cover themselves illustrates the futile attempts of the race to save itself from the eternal effects of sin by works of morality, penance and the like. What is the only covering that avails for the sinner (<sup><4192></sup>Romans 3:22, <sup><4191></sup>2 Corinthians 5:21)?

### THE TRIAL (VV. 8-13)

"Voice" might be rendered by sound, and "cool" by wind. How does verse 8 indicate the character and degree of their shame? Do God's words (v. 9) express judgment only, or may they have expressed grace? If the latter, in what sense? Does Adam tell the exact truth (v. 10)? Was it merely shame or the sense of sin that drove him away? How does God's question (v. 11) suggest the kind of knowledge that had now come to Adam? Does verse 12 show a spirit of repentance or self-justification on his part? In the last analysis does he cast the blame on the woman or God?

### THE SENTENCE ON THE SERPENT (VV. 14-15)

On which of the guilty does God first pass sentence? Has the curse of verse 14 been fulfilled? Compare <sup><2365></sup>Isaiah 65:25, and notice that even in the millennium when the curse is removed from all other cattle it will still remain on the serpent. But how does this curse suggest that previously the serpent did not crawl? (Naturalists describe the organism of the serpent as one of extreme degradation, and say that although it belongs to the latest creations of the animal kingdom, yet it represents a decided retrogression in the scale of being, thus corroborating the biblical explanation of its condition.) Has the curse of verse 15 been fulfilled?

But we must not suppose the curse of verse 15 to be limited to the serpent, or else Satan were exempt. See by the marginal references that the seed of the serpent is placed by metonymy for that of Satan and is identified as the wicked and unbelieving people of all the ages (<sup><4197></sup>Matthew 3:7; 13:38; 23:33; <sup><4194></sup>John 8:44; <sup><4193></sup>Acts 13:10; <sup><4198></sup>1 John 3:8). In the same way the seed of the woman might be supposed to stand for the righteous and

believing people in all the ages, and so it does in a certain sense, but especially it stands for our Lord Jesus Christ, the Head and Representative of that people, the One through whom they believe and by whom they become righteous. He Himself is the seed of the woman, and they in Him (<sup><2074></sup>Isaiah 7:14; <sup><4018></sup>Matthew 1:18-25; <sup><4033></sup>Luke 1:31-35; <sup><404></sup>Galatians 4:4-5).

Observe how much this means to us. It is really a promise of a Redeemer and redemption, and being the first promise, it is that out of which all subsequent promises flow. The Bible refers to it again and again in one way and another, and we need to become well acquainted with it. Indeed the rest of the Bible is just a history of the fulfillment of this promise. The Bible is not a history of the world or even of man, but a history of the redemption of man from the sin into which he fell in the garden of Eden. This explains why the whole story of creation is summed up in one chapter of the Bible, and why so little is said about the history of the nations of the earth except Israel.

But in what sense is this a promise of redemption? On the supposition that Christ is the Seed of the woman, what will He do to Satan (v. 15)? When the serpent's head is bruised is not its power destroyed? (For the parallel see <sup><3044></sup>Hebrews 2:14-15 and <sup><6601></sup>Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10.) But what will Satan do to Christ? How may Satan be said to have bruised Christ's heel? (For the answer see <sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 50 and 53, <sup><4201></sup>Psalms 22 and 69, and the chapters of the Gospels that speak of Christ's sufferings and crucifixion.)

### **THE SENTENCE ON ADAM AND EVE (VV. 16-21)**

What is the first feature of the sentence on the woman (v. 16, first clause)? With what chiefly will her sorrow be connected (second clause)? What second feature of her sentence is contained in the last clause?

For what is the man condemned? Does this show him less or more guilty than his wife? What curse precedes that on the man himself? And yet how is it shown that this too is a curse on the man? "Sorrow" is rendered toil in the Revised Version, and hence the curse on the ground entails the toil on the man. How does this curse on the ground express itself from the ground (v. 18)? (The necessities of life must now be forced out of the earth which before might have spontaneously yielded them.) What will this condition of things force out of man (v. 19)? For how long must this normally continue? What part of man returns to the dust (<sup><2117></sup>Ecclesiastes 12:7)? 7 Naturalists

corroborate the Bible testimony to the curse by explaining that thorns and thistles are an abortion in the vegetable world, the result of arrested development and imperfect growth. They disappear by cultivation and are transformed into branches, thus showing what their character may have been before the curse, and what it may be when through Christ the curse will have been removed (~~621~~ Revelation 22:1-5). How deeply significant the crown of thorns, the sign of the curse which Jesus bore for us!

### THE PENALTY (VV. 22-24)

To whom do you suppose the Lord God said this? Who is meant by "us"? Did you notice the same plural pronoun in ~~0026~~ Genesis 1:26? The use of this is one of the earliest intimations of the Trinity more fully revealed in the New Testament. Indeed the earliest intimation is in the first verse of Scripture in the name God or (Hebrew) Elohim. This is a plural noun but associated with a singular verb, thus suggesting the idea of plurality in unity.

What reason is given for thrusting Adam and Eve out of Eden (v. 22)? Has it occurred to you that there was mercy in this act? Having obtained the knowledge of evil without the power of resisting it, would it not have added to their calamity if, by eating of the tree of life, they had rendered that condition everlasting?

What is the name of the mysterious beings placed on guard at the east of the garden (v. 24)? They seem to be the special guardians of God's majesty, the vindicators of God's broken law, a thought emphasized by their symbolical position over the mercy seat in the tabernacle at a later period. "The flaming sword" has been translated by *shekinah*, the name of the visible glory of God which rested on the mercy seat. May it be that we have here a representation of the mode of worship now established at Eden to show God's anger at sin, and to teach the mediation of a promised Savior as the way of access to God? As later, so now God seems to say, "I will commune with thee from between the cherubim" (~~0250~~ Exodus 25:10-22).

### QUESTIONS

1. How would you prove that Satan and not the serpent was the real tempter in Eden?

2. In what way does the temptation of the second Adam (Christ) harmonize with this of the first Adam?
3. What does the making of the aprons of fig leaves illustrate?
4. How does natural history throw light on the curse pronounced on the serpent?
5. Who especially is meant by "the Seed of the woman"?
6. What is the Bible?
7. What do naturalists say as to the nature of thorns and thistles?
8. With what two or three suggestions of the Trinity have we met thus far in our lessons?
9. Of what do the cherubim seem to be the vindicators, and what suggestions does this fact bring to mind?
10. How many questions in the text of our lesson have you been able satisfactorily to answer?

## GENESIS 4-5 — THE STREAM OF HUMANITY DIVIDED

### TWO KINDS OF WORSHIPPERS (4:1-8)

What were the occupations of these brothers? What does the name of God in verse 3 bring to mind from our second lesson? We are not told how God showed respect for Abel's offering and disrespect for Cain's, but possibly, as on later occasions, fire may have come out from before the Lord (i.e., in this case from between the cherubim) to consume the one in token of its acceptance. A more important question is why God showed respect for it? Reading <sup><S104></sup>Hebrews 11:4 we see that "by faith" Abel offered his sacrifice. This means faith is some previous revelation or promise of God touching the way a guilty sinner might approach Him. Such a revelation was doubtless given in <sup><W12></sup>Genesis 3:21, which has been reserved for consideration until now.

Where did God obtain the "coats of skins" mentioned there except as some innocent animal (a lamb?) was slain for the purpose? In this circumstance doubtless is set before us in type the truth afterwards revealed that there is such a thing as a sinner's placing the life of another between his guilty soul

and God (<sup><3022></sup>Hebrews 9:22). Abel grasped this truth by faith, and submitted his will to God's testimony regarding it. Just what teaching he had concerning it we do not know, but the result shows that it was sufficient. He approached God in the revealed way, while Cain refused to do so. It is not that Cain's offering was not good of its kind, but before a man's offering is received the man himself must be received, and this is only possible on the ground of the atoning sacrifice and the shed blood of Jesus Christ to which Abel's offering pointed (see <sup><1025></sup>Matthew 20:28; <sup><1046></sup>John 14:6; <sup><4042></sup>Acts 4:12; <sup><1021></sup>Romans 3:21, 25; <sup><3011></sup>Hebrews 11:11-14; <sup><1018></sup>1 Peter 1:18-21; I <sup><1007></sup>John 1:7; <sup><1005></sup>Revelation 1:5-6).

What was the effect on Cain (v. 5)? Notice that the question put to him: "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?" might be rendered: "If thou doest well, shall it (thy countenance) not be lifted up?" When a man does ill he can not look God in the face. But the following sentence is equally interesting: "If thou doest not well, sin lieth [*croucheth*] at the door." The idea is that sin, like a hungry beast, is waiting to spring upon Cain if he be not wary. But another idea is possible. The word for sin being the same as for sin-offering, it may be that God is calling Cain's attention to the fact that hope of acceptance remains if he will avail himself of the opportunity before him. The lamb, the sin-offering, is at hand, it lieth at the door — why not humbly lay hold of it and present it as Abel did? What a beautiful illustration of the accessibility of Christ for every sinner. Does Cain accept or reject the invitation? What was the final outcome? (Read here <sup><1012></sup>1 John 3:12.)

### THE FIRST CITY BUILT (4:9-18)

What sin did Cain add to murder (v. 9)? What additional curse is now laid upon the earth and upon Cain on account of his sin (vv. 11-12)? How does the Revised Version translate "vagabond"? The explanation of the mark is unknown, but it may have been set upon Cain lest by his death the populating of the world would have been arrested at a time when it was almost uninhabited.

Verse 16 is significant: "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord." His parents were still in the presence of the Lord (see the last lesson concerning the cherubim and the flaming sword), but he is excluded further. This is the sinner's fate in time and eternity. He now lives in the world without God and without hope (<sup><1022></sup>Ephesians 2:12), but even this

will be exceeded in the day mentioned in <sup><3007></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, which please read. In what land did Cain dwell, and what geographical relation to Eden did it bear? The meaning of Nod is wandering, and it is affecting to think of Cain, and every sinner unreconciled to God through Jesus Christ, as a wanderer in the land of wandering.

The next verse brings up a question often asked: Where did Cain get his wife? The answer is: From among his sisters; for although such are not named, there can be no doubt that daughters were born to Adam and Eve. Marriages of this character are repugnant now and unlawful (<sup><3889></sup>Leviticus 18:9), but it was not so at the beginning, since otherwise the race could not have been propagated.

When it is now said that Cain "builded a city," we should not think of a modern metropolis but only a stockade perhaps, and yet it represents an aggregation of individuals for the promotion of mutual comfort and protection. During Cain's long lifetime it may have attained a prodigious size.

### **PRODUCTS OF CIVILIZATION (4:19-24)**

The posterity of Cain is not given till we reach the seventh from Adam, Lamech, whose history is narrated at length. Of what sin was he guilty in the light of revelation (<sup><3425></sup>Malachi 2:15)? "Adah" means ornament, and "Zillah" shade, and it is not unlikely that the sensuous charms of women now began to be unduly prominent. The suggestion of wealth and possessions is presented in verse 20, art comes into view with Jubal (see especially the Revised Version), and the mechanical sciences with Tubal-cain. The cutting instruments speak of husbandry and agriculture, but also alas! of war and murder, preparing us for what follows in Lamech's history. The latter's words to his wives are in poetry, and breathe a spirit of boasting and revenge, showing how man's inventions in science and art were abused then as now.

These antediluvians, in the line of Cain at least, seem to have done everything to make their life in sin as comfortable as possible in contrast to any desire to be delivered from it in God's way.



## MEN OF FAITH (4:25 AND 5:24)

What is the name of the third son of Adam? While contemporaneous with Cain what indicates that he was younger? What is immediately predicated of his line (4:26)? Notice the capital letters in the name of God, and recall the Hebrew word for which it stands and the truth it illustrates. If now men began to call on the name of Jehovah, the God of promise and redemption, may it indicate that they had not been calling on Him for some time before? Does it then speak of a revival, and single out the Sethites from the line of Cain? In the same connection, notice that nothing is said of their building cities, or owning possessions, or developing the arts and sciences. Nor is mention made of polygamy among them, nor murder, nor revenge. Not that they may have been wholly free from these things, but that the absence of any record of them shows a testimony to their character as compared with the descendants of Cain. They were the men of faith as distinguished from the men of the world. Thus early was the stream of humanity divided.

Notice again the phrase "the generations of" and refer to what was said about it in an earlier lesson. Here it introduces the line of Seth as distinguished from Cain and for the purpose of leading up to the story of Noah, with whose history the next great event in the story of redemption is identified.

But first notice Noah's ancestor Enoch (5:18-24). This is not the same Enoch as in verse 4:17, but a descendant of Seth. What mark of faith is attached to his life story (v. 22)? And what reward came to him thereby (v. 24)? How does <sup><3116></sup>Hebrews 11:5 explain this? The translation of Enoch into the next world is a type of the translation of the church at the second coming of Christ (<sup><3116></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Enoch was a prophet and spoke of that day (Jude 14). And notice finally that he was the seventh from Adam in the line of Seth, as Lamech was in the line of Cain. What a contrast between the two, between the people of the world and the people of God, the men of reason and the men of faith! What a contrast in their lives and in the end of their lives!

This lesson had better not close without some reference to the longevity of men in those days. It is singular that it is not spoken of in the line of Cain. May it be attributed to the godliness in that of Seth? Examine <sup><1901></sup>Psalm 91, especially the last verse, and consider also what <sup><2361></sup>Isaiah 65:20 says on the longevity of men in the millennium. Observe too, that this longevity was a

means of preserving the knowledge of God in the earth, since tradition could thus be handed down for centuries from father to son.

## QUESTIONS

1. Can you recite ~~<S10>~~ Hebrews 11:4?
2. With what previous event may Abel's act of faith be connected?
3. If Abel walked by faith, by what did Cain walk?
4. What two constructions might be placed on the phrase, "sin lieth at the door"?
5. What was the name of the oldest city in the world?
6. Who was the first polygamist?
7. Was primeval civilization based on holiness or sin?
8. What did men begin to do in the days of Seth?
9. Whose history shows death to be not inevitable?
10. What evidential value is found in the longevity of antediluvian man?

## GENESIS 6-9 — THE FIRST CULMINATION OF SIN

### DEGENERATION (6:1-8)

The results of civilization were morally downward instead of upward, even the Sethites becoming corrupted in time as seen in the fact that after Enoch's translation only Noah and his family were found faithful. Just as the translation of Enoch was a type of that of the church when Jesus comes, so the moral condition of the world after his translation is a type of that which shall prevail after the translation of the Church (see ~~<D18>~~ Luke 18:8; ~~<S10>~~ 2 Thessalonians 2; ~~<S10>~~ 2 Timothy 3; ~~<G10>~~ 2 Peter 3).

To return to ~~<D18>~~ Genesis 5:28, note that the Lamech there spoken of is not the descendant of Cain previously mentioned, but the son of Methuselah in the line of Seth. The name Noah means comfort, but how do Lamech's words testify of the sad experiences of men in those days on account of sin? What feature of sin is mentioned at the opening of chapter 6? Some think the Sethites are meant by "the sons of God," but others regard it as a reference to fallen angels who kept not their own principality, but left their

proper habitation (Jude 6) and consorted with human beings. Pember's work, *Earth's Earliest Ages*, presents arguments for this view which are corroborated by such scientific facts as are given by Sir J. William Dawson in *The Meeting Place of Geology and History*. In consequence of this awful sin, to what determination does Jehovah come (v. 3)? But what respite, nevertheless, is He still willing to bestow?

Verse 4 is sadly interesting. The Hebrew for giants is *nephilim* (RV), which means fallen ones, and in the judgment of some refers to the sons of God or fallen angels of the preceding verses. A slightly different punctuation makes the verse read thus: "There were nephilim [fallen ones] in the earth in those days, and also after that." "After that" seems to refer to <sup><0433></sup>Numbers 13:31-33, where in the report of the spies to Moses they speak of the men of Canaan as of "great stature," adding: "And there we saw the nephilim, the sons of Anak which come of the nephilim." This suggests that the culminating sin of the Canaanites was not different from that of the antediluvians. Observe further that the offspring of these sinful unions became the "mighty men which were of old, the men of renown," from which possibly the ancients obtained their ideas of the gods and demi-gods of which the classics treat.

How does verse 5 define the extent of the wickedness of these days? Of course, when Jehovah is spoken of as repenting (v. 6), the language is used in an accommodated sense. Jehovah never repents or changes His mind, but His dealings with men as governed by their conduct appear to them as if He did so. What now becomes His purpose? Who alone is excepted? What shows that even in this case it is not of merit?

### **THE ARK AND ITS CONTENTS (6:9-7:10)**

Notice the phrase "the generations of" and recall the instruction about it in lesson 2. When Noah is spoken of as just and perfect, that relative sense is used in which any man is just and perfect before God who believes His testimony and conforms his life to it. It is in this sense that every true believer on Jesus Christ is just and perfect. What two charges does God make against the earth (vv. 12-13)? What is Noah commanded (v. 14)? The measurement of the cubit is uncertain, the ordinary length being 18 inches, the sacred cubit twice that length, and the geometric, which some think may be meant, six times the common cubit. At the lowest calculation the ark was as large as some of our

ocean liners. Notice "covenant" (v. 18), and connect it with the original promise of 3:15. Why was Noah to take two of every living thing into the ark (vv. 19-20)? What else was he to take (v. 21)? Mention is made of the sevens of clean beasts (7:2), doubtless for the purpose of sacrifice in the ark and after departing from it. If inquiry be raised as to how so many animals could be accommodated in such a space, it is to be remembered

- (1) that the ark in all its three stories contained probably one hundred thousand square feet of space;
- (2) perhaps the animals were not the totality of all the animals known in all the world, but those known to Noah; and
- (3) that the distinct species of beasts and birds even in our own day have been calculated as not more than three hundred.

### **DURATION AND EXTENT OF THE FLOOD (7:11-8:14)**

When did the flood begin (v. 11)? What shows an uprising of the oceans and seas, occasioned perhaps by a subsiding of the land? How long did the rain continue? What suggests a rising of the water even after the rain ceased (vv. 17-19)? How long did it continue to rise (v. 24)? What circumstance mentioned in 2:5 may have given "a terrifying accompaniment" to the rain? When and where did the ark rest (8:4)? *Ararat* is rendered Armenia in ~~12187~~ 2 Kings 19:37 and ~~23738~~ Isaiah 37:38. What is the story of Noah's messengers (vv. 6-12)? How long did the flood last (v. 14)? A beautiful parallel is found in considering the ark as a type of Christ. All the waves of divine judgment passed over Him, and He put Himself judicially under the weight of all His people's sins. But He rose triumphantly from the grave to which that penalty had consigned Him. Nor did He thus rise for Himself only, but for all believers who are in Him by faith as was Noah and his family in the ark.

But did the flood actually occur? and did it cover the whole earth? are questions frequently asked. As to the first, the Word of God is all-sufficient to the man of faith, but it is pertinent to add that the event is corroborated by tradition and geology. As to the second, there may be a division of opinion even among those who accept the authority of Scripture.

~~010719~~ Genesis 7:19-23 seems to teach its universality, but whether this means

universal according to the geography of Noah or Moses or the geography of the present, is a question as to which Christians are divided.

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH NOAH (8:20-9:19)

What did Noah do on leaving the ark (v. 20)? How does this verse bear on 7:2? What indicates the acceptance of his offering, and by its acceptance that of himself (v. 21)? What divine promise was associated with this acceptance? Of course, this does not mean that no further judgment is to be visited on the earth, as may be seen by <sup><3007></sup>2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; <sup><6080></sup>2 Peter 3:10-13, and <sup><6642></sup>Revelation 14:22.

Where, earlier, have we met the blessing now bestowed on Noah and his family (9:1)? What new power over the brute creation is now put into man's hands (v. 2)? If his dominion previously was that of love, of what was its nature to be henceforth? If his food previously was limited to herbs, to what is it now extended (v. 3)? But what limitation is put upon it, and why (v. 4)? We see here that from the times of the deluge the blood was constituted a most sacred thing, devoted exclusively to God, to make expiation on the altar of sacrifice for the sins of men (<sup><8771></sup>Leviticus 17:11-14). When the blood of the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world" had been shed, this prohibition ceased naturally, together with the reason for it. The apostles, nevertheless, as a concession to the scruples of the Jewish Christians, ordained its continuance (<sup><4451></sup>Acts 15:1-29), a concession which likewise of itself fell into disuse with the cessation of the occasion for it — the disappearance of Judaic Christianity.

To speak further of eating meat, some regard it as a lightening of the curse in that flesh was more easily obtained than the products of the soil, but others consider it as bearing on the intercourse with the spiritual beings previously spoken of. In this connection it is in point to remark that the votaries of spiritualism, theosophy and other occultisms are denied a meat diet on the ground that it interferes with their mysterious (and sinful) affinities.

What magisterial functions not previously exercised are now conferred on man (vv. 5-6)? The death penalty has been abused in almost all the countries of the world, but this does not justify its abolition in cases of premeditated homicide; and unwillingness to apply to the criminal the pain of death ordained by God Himself, the Author of life, always tends to the increase of crime and gives loose rein to personal vengeance. The

inviolability of human life means that the life of a human being is a thing so sacred that he who takes it without just cause must pay for it with his own in amends to outraged justice, both human and divine. Compare ~~Gen~~ Numbers 35:33.

What are the terms of the covenant now made with Noah (vv. 8-11)? And what token or seal does God set to it (vv. 12-17)? The rainbow may have been seen before, but God now employs it for a new purpose. And the token is not only for us, but also for every living thing, and for perpetual generations. And then, too, God looks upon it and remembers the covenant whether we do or not, our deliverance depending not on our seeing it. This calls to mind the promise of ~~Ex~~ Exodus 12:13: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."

## QUESTIONS

1. What was the result of the earliest civilization, morally considered?
2. What two applications have been given to the "sons of God" in Genesis 6?
3. What is the Hebrew for "giants," and what is its meaning?
4. How might be explained the large number of animals in the ark?
5. In what way may the ark be used as a type of Christ?
6. In what two ways is the story of the flood corroborated?
7. What two reasons have been given for the privilege of eating meat?
8. What element will be employed in the next destruction of the earth?
9. Have we biblical authority and mandate for capital punishment?
10. What circumstances of special interest do you recall in connection with the rainbow?

## GENESIS 9:18-11 — THE ORIGIN OF THE NATIONS

### NOAH'S PROPHECY (9:18-29)

To which of the sons of Noah is attention called at the beginning of this section, and why (v. 18)? To what occupation did Noah apply himself after the flood (v. 38)? Of what sin was he guilty (v. 21)? Of what grosser sin

was his son guilty (v. 22)? What curse did Noah pronounce on the line of Ham (v. 25)? Which particular line? Just why Canaan is selected one can not say. We only know that his father is not once mentioned in this chapter without him, for which God must have had a reason even if it is not revealed. One reason may be to emphasize that the curse rested upon Asiatics rather than Africans. Because certain of these latter are descendants of Ham, and are black, and have served as slaves, men have associated the curse with them, but the facts of the next chapter (10:15-19) are against that idea. The Hebrews or Israelites, the descendants of Shem, who were themselves slaves in Egypt for a while, afterwards enslaved the Canaanites (<sup><1023></sup>Joshua 9:23-27; <sup><1020></sup>1 Kings 9:20-21), and this in part is a fulfillment of this prophecy. It is pertinent that the Canaanites, like others in the line of Ham, the Babylonians, Egyptians and Africans, inherited the sensuous characteristics of their progenitor for which the judgments of God fell upon them later.

Passing over the blessing upon Shem, or rather the God of Shem, mention the three things prophesied of Japheth (v. 27). He is enlarged in the sense that the peoples of Europe sprung out of his loins, to say nothing of the Hindus and doubtless the Mongolians. He "dwells in the tents of Shem" in the sense at least that he partakes of the blessing of their religion, that of the Bible. Canaan is his servant in the sense doubtless in which the nations and tribes descendant from him are subject to the control of Europe.

### THE NATIONS (CHAP. 10)

This chapter is more than a list of names of individuals. Several are names of families or nations, and make it the most important historical document in the world. You will see that the stream of the race divides according to the three sons of Noah. Whose division is first traced (v. 2)? What part of the world was settled by his offspring (v. 5)? This might read: "By these were the coast lands of the nations divided," and research indicates that the names of these sons and grandsons are identical with the ancient names of the countries bordering on the seas of northern and northwestern Europe. (Examine map number 1 in the back of your Bible). Whose offspring are next traced (v. 6)? A similar examination will show that these settled towards the south and southwest in the lands known to us as Palestine, Arabia, Egypt, Abyssinia, etc. Whose offspring are last named (v. 21)? What distinction is given to Shem in that verse? "Eber" is another form of the name Hebrew, and the distinction of Shem is that he was the ancestor

of the Hebrews or the Israelites. His descendants settled rather in the south and southeast, Assyria, Persia, etc.

### **THE FIRST WORLD-MONARCHY (10:8-12)**

The verses relating to Nimrod call for attention. What describes the energy of his character? How does verse 9 show his fame to have descended even to Moses' time, the human author of Genesis? What political term is met with for the first time in verse 10? Attention to the map will show "the land of Shinar" identical with the region of Babylon in Asia, affording the interesting fact that this kingdom was thus founded by an Ethiopian. Verse 11 might read, "but of that land [i.e., Shinar] he went forth into Assyria," etc., indicating Nimrod to have been the inspiration of the first world-monarchy in the sense that he united under one head the beginnings both of Babylon and Assyria, proving him a mighty hunter of men as well as wild beasts. Rawlinson's *Origin of the Nations* says: "The Christian may with confidence defy his adversaries to point out any erroneous or impossible statements in the entire [tenth] chapter, from its commencement to its close."

### **THE TOWER OF BABEL (CHAP. 11)**

The contents of this chapter seem to precede in time those of chapter 10. There we have the story of how the nations were divided, and here why they were divided. What was true of the race linguistically until this time (v. 1)? To what locality had they been chiefly attracted (v. 2)? What new mechanical science is now named (v. 3)? What two-fold purpose was the outcome of this invention (v. 4)? What was the object in view? Is there a suggestion of opposition to the divine will in the last phrase of that verse? (Compare 9:1 and 1:28.) If we take verse 5 literally, it suggests a theophany like that in chapter 18, but perhaps the writer is speaking in an accommodated sense. He means that God's mind was now fastened on this act of human disobedience and rebellion, for such it seems to be. Notice the divine soliloquizing in verse 6, and the reasoning it represents:

- (1) this people are united by the fact that they have but one language;
- (2) this union and sense of strength have led to their present undertaking; and



**(3)** success here will generate other schemes in opposition to My purposes and to their disadvantage; therefore this must be frustrated. What was the divine plan of frustration (v. 7)? What was the result (v. 8)? What name was given this locality, and why (v. 9)? (Observe that Babylon and Babel are the same.)

With this blow of the avenging rod of God came to an end the third experiment God was making with the apostate race. They had again turned their backs on God, making haste to caste into oblivion the terrible lesson of the flood; and so with the confusion of their speech God delivered them up to the lusts of their own hearts. (Compare ~~ROMS~~Romans 1:28.)

## QUESTIONS

1. From which of Noah's sons did the Hebrews descend?
2. What peoples are the descendants of Japheth?
3. Who seemed to aspire after the first world monarch?
4. What distinction in the account of the origin of the nations is seen between chapters 10 and 11?
5. What came to an end at this period?

## GENESIS 11:10-12:9 — THE ORIGIN OF ISRAEL

### THE DIVINE PURPOSE

We have reached a fourth experiment in God's dealings with the apostate race, only this shall not ultimately be the failure the others proved. It should be understood, however, that in speaking of failure the reference is to man's part and not God's. Before the flood the sin of the race was atheism, outright denial of divine authority with the indulgence of sinful lusts it produced and the dissolution of moral and social bonds. But after the flood idolatry took its place — just how, or why, it is difficult to say — and long before Abram's time polytheism prevailed both in Chaldea and Egypt.

But God's purpose from the beginning was the redemption of the race according to the promise of ~~GENESIS~~Genesis 3:15, and as incident thereto He will now call out a single individual from the corrupt mass, and

make of him a nation. Special training and care shall be given to this individual and this nation that there may be in the earth

(1) a repository for His truth to keep alive His name;

(2) a channel through which "the Seed of the woman," the world's Redeemer, may come among men; and

(3) a pedestal on which He Himself may be displayed in His character before the other nations of the world to the sanctifying of His name among them and their ultimate return to His sovereignty. Steady contemplation of this three-fold purpose in the call of Abram and the origin of Israel will prevent any charge of partiality against God for dealing with them differently from other peoples, and will help us to see that all His blessing of them has been for our sake, thus quickening our interest in all that is revealed concerning them.

Israel has thus far fulfilled only part of her original mission. She has retained the name and truth of God in the earth, and given birth to the Redeemer (though she crucified Him), but she has not sanctified God among the peoples by her behavior. For this she has been punished in the past, and is now scattered among the peoples in whose sight she denied Him; but the prophets are a unit that some day she shall be restored to her land again in a national capacity, and after passing through great tribulation, be found penitent and believing, clothed in her right mind and sitting at the feet of Jesus. Then she will take up the broken threads again, and begin anew to carry out the original plan of sanctifying God among the nations. She will witness for Jesus as her Messiah in the millennial age for the conversion of those nations and their obedience to His law. All this will be brought out gradually but plainly as we proceed through the prophets.

### **THE GENERATIONS OF SHEM AND TERAH (11:10-32)**

The generations of Shem and Terah are the children who sprang from them and furnished the descent of Abram and the Israelites. Which one of the sons of Shem was divinely chosen for this honor? (Compare verse 10 with 10:21.) What seven facts are stated of Haran (vv. 27-29)? Iscah, one of his daughters, not otherwise mentioned, is thought by some identical with her whom Abram married and whose name was changed to Sarai (my princess) after that event. Others, however, base on Abram's words (20:13) that Sarai was a daughter of Terah by a second wife, and thus his half sister.

Still others conjecture that of the supposed two wives of Terah, one was Haran's mother and the other Abram's, so that in marrying his niece, he was at liberty to speak of her as his sister, as in Egypt (12:19), in the same sense in which he could call Lot his brother though he was also his nephew (14:14).

Haran, which is the name of a locality, called Charran, in ~~400~~Acts 7:2-4, must not be confounded with the other word which is the name of Terah's son, since they are quite distinct. Notice the location of these places on the map, and observe that because of the desert of Arabia they had to travel first towards the northwest (about 650 miles) to the fords of the Euphrates, and then southwest (say five hundred miles) to Hebron or Beersheba, which later became Abram's favorite abode.

Ur must have been a city of great wealth and influence, so that Abram was brought up under circumstances of the highest civilization. Documents written in his day have recently been brought to light, in which his name is mentioned as borne by men of that land. And as a further mark of historicity, the name of the city itself, Ur of the Chaldees, or Ur-Kasdim, as the Hebrew puts it, was the peculiar form of its name in Abram's time, though subsequently it had another form. One more feature of interest is that it was the ancient seat of the worship of the Moon, and that Abram and all his family were undoubtedly idolaters, so that this call of God to him, like His call to us in Christ, was entirely of grace. In examining this point, consult ~~0353~~Genesis 31:53 and ~~640~~Joshua 24:2-3, 14-15.

### **ABRAM'S CALL AND HIS RESPONSE (12:1-9)**

How does the King James Version indicate an earlier date for the call of Abram than that which chapter 12 narrates? How is this corroborated by ~~400~~Acts 7:2? Stephen, speaking of this call, indicates that God "was seen to Abraham," as if some visible manifestation was vouchsafed to him at the beginning. In what form this may have been we do not know, but sufficiently clear to have shown the patriarch the distinction between gods of wood and stone and the only true God.

What seven promises are given Abram to encourage his faith (vv. 2-3)? God's authority could find fit expression only in a nation bound together under institutions of His own appointment, since many scattered family altars could not bear an adequate witness for His unity. Notice again that for Abram to become great and his offspring to develop into a great nation

cooperation would be required on the part of his and their neighbors. To secure this, God lays this curse and blessing upon their enemies and friends.

Have you located Shechem? How is Abram comforted at this place (v. 7)? What additional promise is now given him? This gift to his seed of the land should be strongly emphasized. It was, and is, Jehovah's land. Ezekiel speaks of it as "the middle, or navel, of the earth" (38:12 RV), and it is peculiarly situated geographically, commercially and politically, but especially historically and prophetically. It has been given to Israel as her possession forever, but not her ownership, as we shall learn by and by (<sup><R25></sup>Leviticus 25:23). Moreover, so closely is Jehovah's purpose of redemption associated with the land as well as the people of Israel that when they are separated from it, as we shall see, they are separated from Him, and the lapse of time in their history is not considered until they are returned to their land again. In a word, they can never dwell elsewhere and be His people or fulfill their calling.

## QUESTIONS

1. How would you identify the three previous experiments with the race?
2. How would you distinguish between the sin of men before and following the flood?
3. What was the threefold purpose in the call of Abram and the nation of Israel?
4. How should the knowledge of this influence us?
5. How far has this purpose yet been realized?
6. Will it be entirely realized, and if so, when and how?
7. How might Abram's conduct in <sup><0129></sup>Genesis 12:19 be explained?
8. What outside proof have we of the historicity of these chapters?
9. What is God's peculiar relation to the land as well as the people of Israel?
10. Draw an outline map of Abram's journey from [Jr to Haran and Shechem.

## GENESIS 12:10-13 — THE PROMISE RENEWED TO ABRAM

### ABRAM IN EGYPT (12:10-20)

It is felt that Abram acted unadvisedly in taking this journey to Egypt, for which three reasons are assigned:

- (1) God could have provided for him in Canaan, notwithstanding the famine;
- (2) there was no command for him to leave Canaan, to which place God had definitely called him; and
- (3) he fell into difficulty by going, and was obliged to employ subterfuge to escape it. Still these arguments are not convincing, and in the absence of direct rebuke from God we should withhold judgment.

Concerning the trial which Abram encountered, how did the last lesson justify in part, his subterfuge? What shows the unwisdom of it even on the natural plane of things (vv. 18-19)? How does his character suffer in comparison with that of Pharaoh? Who interposed on his behalf, and how (v. 17)? How does this circumstance demonstrate that the true God has ways of making Himself known even to heathen peoples? How does it further demonstrate that the record itself is true?

### SEPARATION FROM LOT (13:1-13)

If Abram has been out of fellowship with God during his Egyptian sojourn, how is that fellowship now restored (vv. 3-4)? Have we any lesson here concerning our own backsliding? (Compare ~~Gen~~ 1 John 1:9.) What shows the unselfishness and breadth of Abram's character in dealing with Lot (vv. 8-9)? How does this show that Canaan at this time must have been largely depopulated? What principle governed Lot in his choice (vv. 10-11)? How does the Revised Version render verse 12? Have you identified these localities on the map? What shows the unwisdom of Lot's choice (v. 13)? Read on this point ~~Gen~~ 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1.

## **THE PROMISE RENEWED TO ABRAM (13:14-18)**

Does Abram suffer for his unselfishness? What advance does this renewal of the promise record so far as the land is concerned (v. 15)? So far as Abram's posterity is concerned? What two references to Abram's seed do verses 15 and 16 record? In what way may he be said to have taken possession of the land in advance (v. 17)? Have you identified Hebron? Abram by the Egyptian episode may have well felt he had forfeited the promise, if it had rested on his faithfulness, but instead it rested upon the faithfulness of God. How kind, therefore, for God to have reassured His unworthy servant, and even to have given him a larger vision of what the promise meant!

### **QUESTIONS**

Because of the number and nature of the questions in the lesson itself, a special section of questions is unnecessary here. Group leaders may want to review the lesson looking for potential discussion topics.

## **GENESIS 14-15 — THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT**

### **THE CONFEDERATED KINGS (14:1-12)**

How does the Revised Version translate "nations" in verse 17? In what valley was the battle joined (v. 3)? How is that valley now identified? Against what six peoples did Chedorlaomer and his confederates campaign in the fourteenth year (vv. 5-7)? You will find these peoples located on the east and south of the Dead Sea.

Who were victors in this case (v. 10)? How did they reward themselves (v. 11)? What gives us a special interest in this story (v. 12)? Objectors have denied the historicity of it, but the monuments of Assyria, Babylonia and Egypt, with their inscriptions and paintings, confirm it. The names of some of these kings are given, and it would appear that Chedorlaomer was the general name of a line of Elamite kings corresponding to the several Pharaohs and Caesars of later times.

## ABRAM'S EXPLOIT OF ARMS (14:13-24)

By what name was Abram distinguished among these heathen peoples (v. 13)? What hint have we of his princely power (v. 14)? What was the manner of his attack (v. 15)? The motive for it (v. 16)?

We are not surprised at Abram's meeting with the king of Sodom on his return, but what other king is named (v. 18)? What office did he hold beside that of king? Was he a heathen like the others (v. 19)? Who gave the tithes, Abram or he? (Compare ~~806~~ Hebrews 7:6.)

Melchizedek seems to have been a king of Salem, later called Jerusalem, who like Job had not only retained the knowledge of the true God but also like him was in his own person a prince and a priest. (Compare ~~806~~ Job 1:5-8; 29; 25.) Recent discoveries of correspondence of the Egyptian kings written at about the time of the Exodus refute the theory once held that Melchizedek was an imaginary character and that this incident never occurred. This correspondence includes letters of the king of Jerusalem, Ebed-Tob by name, which means "the servant of the Good One," who speaks of himself in the very phrases used by his predecessor Melchizedek (~~806~~ Hebrews 7). The probability is that Melchizedek, like Chedorlaomer, was the common name of a race or dynasty of priest-kings ruling over that city. He is employed as a type of Christ in ~~806~~ Psalm 110 and in ~~806~~ Hebrews 7.

How does the king of Sodom probably the successor to him who had been slain (v. 10), express his gratitude to Abram (v. 21)? What is Abram's response (vv. 22-24)? How does this response show that Melchizedek worshipped the same God? What elements of character does it show in Abram?

## THE SECOND TEST AND REWARD OF FAITH (15:1-6)

"After these things" Abram might have feared that the defeated warriors would return in force and overwhelm him, nor is it improbable that misgivings arose as to relinquishing the spoil he was entitled to as conqueror. But God could deliver him from fear in the one case and make up to him the loss in the other. How does He express both ideas in verse 1?

But what burdens Abram heavier than either of these things (v. 2)? God promised him a seed to inherit Canaan, which should be multiplied as the

dust of the earth, yet he was going hence childless. He who should be possessor of his house under these circumstances would be Dammesek Eliezer (RV). Just how to explain this is difficult, but Eliezer was his steward, and oriental custom may have entailed the possessions of his master on such an one where no natural heir existed. We cannot explain this but would call attention to the reply of Jehovah, that it is not an adopted son he shall have but a supernatural one (v. 4). And now what does Jehovah do to Abram (v. 5)? And what does He ask Abram to do? And what does He then promise him? Was Abram's faith able to measure up to this stupendous declaration (v. 6)? And in what did this faith of Abram result to him (v. 6, last clause)? The words, "counted it to him for righteousness" reveal something more important to Abram personally than the promise of a seed, except that the seed, considered as the forerunner and type of Christ, was the only ground at length on which Abram might be counted righteous. To understand these words is vital to an understanding of our own redemption, and an apprehension of the Gospel.

Abram was a sinner, born into a state of wrongness, but God now puts him by an act of grace into a state of rightness, not because of Abram's righteous character but on the ground of his belief in God's word. Nor does this righteous state into which he is brought make it true that thereafter he is without a flaw in his character, for he is guilty of much. But he has a right standing before God, and because of it God can deal with him in time and eternity as He cannot deal with other men who do not have this standing. The significance of this to us is seen in ~~4023~~ Romans 4:23-25, which you are urged to read prayerfully.

The question is sometimes asked whether Abram — for that matter, any Old Testament saint — was justified or made righteous just as we are today. The answer is yes and no. They were made righteous just as we are in that Christ took away their guilt on the cross and wrought out a righteousness for them, but they were not made righteous just as we are in that they knew not Christ as we do. Christ indeed said that Abram rejoiced to see His day, and he saw it and was glad (~~4086~~ John 8:56), but this does not mean that he saw and understood what we now do of the Person and finished work of Christ.

The fact is this: God set a certain promise before Abram. He believed God's testimony concerning it and was counted righteous in consequence. God sets a certain promise before us, and if we believe God's testimony



concerning it we are counted righteous in consequence. The promise to Abram was that of a natural seed; the promise to us in that of salvation through Jesus Christ, the anti-type of that seed. We have but to believe His testimony concerning Jesus Christ, as Abram believed it concerning the seed, to obtain the same standing before God forever. It is not our character that gives it to us, nor does our change of standing immediately produce a change of character, but this does not affect the standing, which is the important thing because the character grows out of it. The reward of the first test of faith brought Abram a country (Genesis 12), but that of the second brought him a better country, that is, a heavenly one (<sup>38108</sup>Hebrews 11:8-16).

### THE COVENANT OF GOD (15:7-12, 17-21)

In what words does God now identify Himself and renew the promise of the land (v. 7)? Is Abram altogether satisfied about the land (v. 8)? What does God tell him to do (v. 9)? What now happens to Abram (v. 12)? What next takes place with reference to the sacrifice (v. 17)! And in connection with this what does God do with Abram? How does He define the boundaries of His gift? We ought to say that "the river of Egypt," can hardly mean the Nile, although some so regard it. Others think it is the wady or brook of Egypt lying at the southern limit of the land of Israel (<sup>0845</sup>Numbers 34:5; <sup>0850</sup>Joshua 15:4; <sup>2272</sup>Isaiah 27:12).

The strange incident recorded here is of symbolic importance. Men entered into covenant with one another in this way, that is, they would slay an animal, divide it into parts, walk up and down between them and thus solemnly seal the bond they had made. Afterward part of the victim would be offered in sacrifice to their gods, while the remainder would be eaten by the parties to the covenant. It was the highest form of an oath. God thus condescended to assure Abram, since the smoking furnace and burning lamp, passing between the pieces and doubtless consuming them, typified His presence and acceptance of the bond. Among men it takes two to make a covenant, but not so here. God is alone in this case, and asks of Abram nothing in return but the repose of confidence in His faithfulness. It is thus that God covenants with us in Christ. He gives, and we take. He promises, and we believe.

But dwelling on what Abram saw we passed over what he heard, and this is an essential part of God's covenant with him (vv. 13-16). What did He

say would be true of Abram's seed for a while? It is a matter of dispute how these four hundred years are computed. Anstey's *Romance of Chronology* says that Abraham's seed here means Isaac and his descendants from the time of the weaning of the former when he became his father's heir, to the date of the Exodus, which was precisely four hundred years. What twofold promise is given Abram personally (v. 15)? What particular reason does God give for the delay in possessing Canaan (v. 16)? "The Amorite" here is the name used doubtless for all the inhabitants of Canaan, of which they were a chief nation and a very wicked one. The long-suffering of God will wait while they go on filling up the measure of their iniquity, but at last the sword of divine justice must fall. The same thing happens with sinners in general, and as another says, it ought to embitter the cup of their pleasures.

## QUESTIONS

1. What corroborative evidence of the historicity of chapter 14 can you name?
2. Recall in detail what has been taught or suggested about Melchizedek.
3. How would you explain <sup><01516></sup>Genesis 15:6?
4. Can you repeat from memory <sup><0423></sup>Romans 4:23-25?
5. In a word, what is the significance of the transaction in <sup><0157></sup>Genesis 15:7-21?

## GENESIS 16-17 — THE TOKEN OF THE COVENANT

Our lessons are grouping themselves around the great facts of Scripture as we proceed, and while we are omitting nothing essential, emphasis is laid on the strategic points. In this lesson the point is the token of the covenant God made with Abram, but there are other thoughts leading up to and giving occasion for it.

### SARAI AND HAGAR (16:1-6)

The incident we now approach is not creditable to Abram or his wife, but there is an explanation of it. At least ten years had elapsed since God

promised a seed to Abram (compare 12:12 with 16:16), and yet the promise had not been realized. Abram had been a monogamist until now, but concubinage was the custom, and the idea impressed Sarai that the delay in the promise might mean a fulfillment of it in another way. Might it be that they should help God to fulfill it? A wise teacher has said that human expediency to give effect to divine promises continues still one of the most dangerous reefs on which the lives of God's people are wrecked. The result might have been foreseen so far as Hagar's treatment of Sarai is concerned (v. 4), but the latter's unfairness towards her husband does nothing to redeem her previous improper conduct. Abram's action (v. 6) will be differently judged by different people, but seems consistent with the original purpose to accept of Hagar not as on equality of wifeness with Sarai, or even as his concubine, but as a supplementary concubine of his wife.

### **THE ANGEL OF THE LORD (16:7-14)**

It is not an angel of the Lord here brought before us, but *The Angel*, an expression always referring to the second Person of the Trinity. He assumes the divine prerogative at verse 10, and is identified as God at verse 13. It is no objection to say that it is only Hagar who thus identifies Him, not only because she must have had evidence of His identity, but because the inspired record in no way contradicts her. While the Angel is Jehovah, it is remarkable that in the name Angel, which means "messenger" or "one sent," there is implied a distinction in the Godhead. There must be one who sends if there is one sent, and since the Father is never sent but always sends, the conclusion is that "The Angel of the LORD" must be God the Son.

Identify on the map "the way to Shur" (v. 7) and observe that Hagar was departing in the direction of her own land. Ishmael means "God heareth." Why was he to be thus called (v. 11)? What character and experience are prophesied of him (see RV)? Where was he to dwell? "In the presence of his brethren" seems to mean "over against" or "to the east of" his brethren.

### **THE COVENANT RENEWED (17:1-8)**

Abram's disobedience or unbelief as illustrated in the matter of Hagar kept him out of fellowship with God for fourteen years or more. (Compare the first verse of this chapter with the last of the preceding one.) What takes

place after so long a time? With what new name does God choose to introduce Himself?

The Hebrew here is *El Shaddai*. *El* means might or power, and *Shaddai* means a shedder forth of bounty. The name depicts God as the all-bountiful One and comes as His revelation of Himself to Abram just when the latter needed to learn that the strength of God is made perfect in human weakness. Abram sought to obtain by his own energy what God only could give him, and having learned his lesson and being ready to give himself to God, God is ready to give Himself to Abram and make him fruitful. He puts something into Abram which at once changes him from Abram to Abraham — something of His own nature.

But what is required of Abram, however, before this (v. 1)? He must be perfect, not in the sense of sinlessness, impossible to mortal, but in that of doing the whole will of God as it is known to him. And on that condition what promise is renewed (v. 2)? It is not as though the covenant of chapter 15 had been abrogated, for "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (<sup>6129</sup>Romans 11:29), but that now the first step is to be taken in its fulfillment. What new attitude, physically considered, is now assumed by Abram in his intercourse with God (v. 3)? What new name is given him, and its meaning (v. 5)? How does the promise of verse 5 read in the Revised Version?

Compare the promise as more fully outlined in verses 6-8 for features additional to those previously revealed. What does God say He will make of him? And what shall come out of him? Have either of these things been said before? What did God say He would establish, and with whom, and for how long? What is new here? A father of many nations indeed has God made Abraham, if we consider his offspring not only in the line of Isaac, but of Ishmael, to say nothing of the children born to him by Keturah, subsequently to come before us.

These nations include the Jews, Arabians, Turks, Egyptians, Afghans, Moroccans, Algerians, and we know not how many more. But we are not to understand the covenant as established with all of these but only with the Jews of Israel, as descendants of Isaac. Isaac is the seed of Abraham in mind here, and of course his antitype, Jesus Christ, is the seed ultimately in mind. Keeping this latter point in view, therefore, the seed includes more than Israel after the flesh, since it takes in all who believe on Jesus Christ,

whether Jews or Gentiles (~~418~~ Galatians 3:29). Peculiar privileges belong to each, but their origin is the same.

### **THE COVENANT TOKEN (17:9-14)**

It is in dispute whether circumcision was original with Abraham and his descendants, or had been a custom in other nations, though of course for other reasons in their case. Nevertheless, the rainbow was chosen to be the sign of the covenant with Noah though it may have existed before, so the prior existence of circumcision does not render it less fit to be the sign of the covenant with Abraham, or less significant. It was the fit symbol of that removal of the old man and that renewal of nature which qualified Abraham to be the parent of the holy seed. To what extent was it to be carried out among the males? What was the penalty for its omission (v. 14)? This cutting off of the people from the covenant did not mean physical death, but exclusion from all their blessings and salvation, an even more serious judgment, since in the end it denoted the endless destruction and total ruin of the man who despised God's covenant. To despise or reject the sign was to despise and reject the covenant itself (see verse 5, last clause). A serious thought for the professing Christian who neglects to observe both parts of the obligation in ~~419~~ Romans 10:9-10.

### **THE PROMISE CONCERNING SARAH (17:15-27)**

How is the name of Sarai changed at this point (v. 15)? God had never promised she should be a mother, and Ishmael, now thirteen years old, had doubtless been recognized through the whole encampment as his father's heir. But now what distinct promise does God give concerning her (v. 16)? How is it received by Abraham (v. 17)? This laughter of Abraham was the exultation of joy and not the smile of unbelief. In this connection note that Isaac means "laughter," and also that it is with him, and not Ishmael, that the covenant is to be established everlastingly.

Are you not pleased that Abraham should have thought of Ishmael as he did (v. 18)? Ishmael as an Arab of the desert, with his descendants, does not make much of a future among the nations of the earth until we consider him as the ancestor of Mohammed. It is estimated the he holds one hundred and fifty million of the inhabitants of the world subject to his spiritual sway, which indicates that Ishmael still lifts his head aloft among

the great founders of empires, and in the moral sphere greater than them all.

## QUESTIONS

1. How do God's people sometimes wreck their lives, as illustrated in this lesson?
2. How does this lesson afford another foreshadowing of the doctrine of the Trinity?
3. Give the meaning of the name Almighty God.
4. Name some of the nations proceeding from Abraham.
5. Who does "the seed" of Abraham include?
6. How does this lesson impress us with the importance of confessing Christ?
7. Where in this lesson have we a kind of parallel to ~~Gen 24:1~~ Luke 24:41?
8. What distinguished descendant of Ishmael can you name?

## GENESIS 18-19 — LOT'S AFTERMATH

We have almost forgotten Lot, but he is not having a happy time in the land of his choice. The Sodomites have learned nothing by experience and are increasing in iniquity and ripening for judgment. The facts in chapter 18 introduce the story of the climax in their case.

### A SECOND THEOPHANY (18:1-15)

The word "LORD" in verse 1 is in capitals, another manifestation of the second Person of the Godhead as in the case of "the Angel of the LORD" in the last lesson. Compare also 13:18 and notice that Abraham is still at Hebron, about twenty miles south of Jerusalem, where he had settled perhaps twenty-five years prior to this time. We may judge this by the fact that when he had become separated from Lot the latter was unmarried, but now, as chapter 19 indicates, had a family including married daughters. Keep giving attention to the map in these historical studies, as it will be increasingly beneficial as we proceed.

In what form does Jehovah seem to have appeared to Abraham (v. 2)? How are the other two men identified (19:1 RV)? Abraham's action in

running to meet and show hospitality to these travelers shows that he did not know their true nature, but yet there was something about them which he recognized as unusual. Notice, for example, his address in verse 3.

How does the speaker in verse 10 identify himself with Jehovah? What do you think of Sarah's laughter in verse 13 as compared with that of Abraham in the last lesson? In the light of the context does it express confidence or doubt (vv. 13-15)?

### **A GREAT PRAYER (18:16-33)**

Abraham's prayer is the first prolonged supplication recorded in the Bible and suggests several thoughts upon the subject:

- (1) The duty and privilege of intercessory prayer, for Abraham was now asking for others, not himself;
- (2) The source and inspiration of prayer, which in this case is the revealed purpose of God concerning Sodom. He who knows God's purposes prays in harmony with them and thus finds abundant food for prayer; but to learn His purpose one must listen to His voice in His Word;
- (3) The value of argument in prayer. See how Abraham pleads the holy and just dealings of God! But to be possessed of arguments one needs to be familiar with what God is and what He says — another reason for searching His revealed Word;
- (4) The right of importunity in prayer. God is not displeased to have us press our cause, but expects us to do so, and frequently answers according to our earnestness; and
- (5) The efficacy of prayer, for Abraham received his real desire, the deliverance of Lot, even though Sodom itself was not saved.

How is Jehovah discriminated from the two men at verses 16 and 17? What reason is given for His readiness to reveal His purpose to Abraham (v. 18)? Read verse 19 in the Revised Version and observe that Abraham's faithfulness to God, resulting in the fulfillment of God's promise to him, was itself of grace. Jehovah says, "I have known him to that end," which is the same as saying, "The purpose I have in calling and blessing Abraham is to keep him faithful that I may bring upon him that which I have

promised." Here is food for prayer surely, that God might know us as He knew Abraham; and perhaps one reason He revealed this dealing of His with Abraham is to stimulate us thus to plead.

How strangely verse 21 sounds, bringing to mind <sup><0115></sup>Genesis 11:5, the note on which please again read. Perhaps in this case the words were spoken by Jehovah in Abraham's hearing. They suggest His fairness in dealing with the wicked, for (speaking after the manner of men) He will not act on hearsay evidence, but learn the facts for Himself. He will send special messengers to report to Him, who alas! obtain all the evidence they need. Does Jehovah Himself visit Sodom? What, in a sense, prevented Him?

### THE SODOM MOB (19:1-11)

What leads to the belief that Lot did not recognize the nature of his visitors (vv. 2-3)? (Compare <sup><5812></sup>Hebrews 13:2.) The following verses show that the Sodomites sought acquaintance with these supposed men for those vile purposes which have ever been associated with the name of their city. It was for this that Lot, at the risk of his life, came to their defense, for the duty of protecting a guest has always been accounted among orientals as the most sacred obligation. Lot's offer concerning his daughters is inexplicable, and yet it shows what Sodom had done for him. How does verse 9 show Lot's unpopularity with his neighbors? What suggests that he had testified against them? (Read here <sup><6115></sup>2 Peter 2:6-9.) Who rescued Lot, and how (v. 10)? What physical judgment was visited upon his antagonists (v. 11)?

### LOT'S ESCAPE (19:12-26)

How does verse 12 illustrate our responsibility for the salvation of our relatives? And verse 14 the indifference with which they often hear our testimony? How does verse 16 illustrate the preventing grace of God to lost sinners? What elements of Lot's character are illustrated (vv. 18-20)? How does verse 30 show his folly a second time in selecting an abiding place? How do verses 21 and 22 show God's regard for the people of His choice, notwithstanding their unworthiness? The prophets of the Bible speak of tribulation coming upon the earth at the close of this age such as was never seen before, but they speak also of the deliverance of the saints out of it and a removal of them by translation (<sup><5113></sup>1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) before the judgments fall (<sup><6110></sup>Revelation 3:10-7:14), and this dealing with



Lot illustrates it in certain ways. By what means were Sodom and Gomorrah destroyed? "Overthrew," verse 25, indicating upheavals and submersions of the ground, perhaps the result of natural causes, but under divine control. The explosion of gas might account for it when the soil, soaked with bitumen, would easily convey the fire until all the cities were destroyed. It used to be thought that the Dead Sea covered the site of these cities, but this opinion is now contradicted.

What judgment befell Lot's wife, and why? Her motives for looking back are not hard to conceive and we need not dwell upon them now, but observe how Jesus applies this circumstance to the end of the age (~~27:31~~ Luke 17:31-33), and note that He thus not only warns us concerning that period but guarantees the authenticity of this whole story.

### **ORIGIN OF THE MOABITES AND THE AMMONITES (19:30-38)**

It must not be supposed that the conduct of Lot's daughters recorded here is endorsed by God. Its record is an incidental evidence of the truth of the Bible, for an imposter palming off a so-called revelation would have omitted such a circumstance reflecting upon them whom God in His mercy had separated unto Himself. The purpose of the record is doubtless to give us the origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites, who figure so largely at a later time as the implacable enemies of Israel, whose vile character is here foreshadowed. They ultimately met the fate at God's hands which their history deserved.

## **GENESIS 20-21 — ABRAHAM AT GERAR**

Why Abraham took the journey in verse 1 is not stated, but perhaps to better his pasturage, for he remained in the vicinity for some time (21:34). Why he employed the same subterfuge about Sarah as before also is not stated except in a general way (v. 12), but it resulted as it did then (v. 2). The chapter illustrates certain principles of God's dealings with different men:

- (1) Imputed righteousness, while instantaneously giving man a right standing before God, does not make that man instantaneously righteous in his own character. If it did, Abraham would not have been guilty of this falsehood, if it were such.

(2) God can reveal Himself to the heathen as clearly as to one of His own people. Abimelech had no doubt that he had received a revelation from the God of Abraham.

(3) The sin of a heathen is against God, no matter what religion he professes or what gods he worships: "I withheld thee from sinning against Me."

(4) God is the conservator of His own truth, and man cannot be trusted with it. Twice has He interposed against Abraham himself for the protection of his wife, in whom were deposited the hopes of the whole human race. These hopes would have been disappointed if Abraham had controlled them (~~GEN 12:13~~ Psalm 105:13-15).

(5) Natural graces of disposition are not a ground of acceptance with God. Abimelech commends himself to us by his expostulation with Abraham (vv. 9-10), his restoration of Sarah and his generous treatment of both (vv. 14-16), and yet it is Abraham (whose conduct suffers by comparison) and not Abimelech who has the privilege and power of intercession: "He is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live" (v. 7).

(6) God deals with His own people, those to whom His righteousness is imputed, on a different principle from that on which He deals with others. Abraham suffers no punishment for this repeated offense, although in the course of his life he had his share of chastisements and corrections, but God is dealing with him not as a criminal before a judge, but as a child before a loving father.

### **ABRAHAM AND ABIMELECH IN COVENANT (21:22-34)**

The circumstance in this section belongs to that of the previous one, although it seems to have taken place at a later time and subsequent to the birth of Isaac. Notice how God blessed Abraham in such a way as to glorify Himself (v. 22), and recall the teaching in an earlier lesson that this was His purpose in the whole history of Israel, which their disobedience at the present time has defeated. Abraham must have had much influence and power for Abimelech to have found it worth while to make a covenant with him (v. 23), but his "kingdom" was very likely limited to the city of Gerar and the surrounding territory. Abraham takes advantage of the occasion to present a claim for damages, as we would say (v. 25), and serious

damages, too, when we reflect on the value of wells in an oriental country to the possessor of sheep and cattle. In verses 27-30 we have a repetition of the transaction in chapter 15. "Beer-sheba" means "the well of the oath." This now becomes the dwelling place of Abraham for some time (v. 34). What new name is ascribed to God in the verse?

## QUESTIONS

1. How does this lesson teach that the ground of our righteousness is objective rather than subjective?
2. What encouragement does it afford in preaching the Gospel to the unsaved?
3. How does it illustrate God's faithfulness to His promises?
4. How does it exhibit the difference between the natural and the spiritual man?
5. Can you find here an illustration of ~~41516~~ Matthew 5:16?

## GENESIS 21-23 — ISAAC'S BIRTH, SARAH'S DEATH

### THE BONDWOMAN AND HER SON (CHAP. 21)

There is little requiring explanation in this chapter, but verses 9-13 should not be passed without a look at ~~4821~~ Galatians 4:21-31. Christians are the spiritual seed of Abraham, and those who would supplement faith in Christ by the works of the law are the children of the bond-woman, who have no place with the children of the promise.

God, however, is not unmindful of Hagar and Ishmael, nor of His promise to Abraham concerning the latter. Although the blessing on the nation is not to flow down through them, yet they are not precluded from partaking of it when it comes. Abraham, there can be little doubt, followed the steps of Ishmael with deep interest, although at the moment appearances are not that way. He was probably included in the gifts spoken of at 25:6, while his presence at his father's obsequies (25:9) shows that the bond of affection between them was not broken.

We know little of Ishmael's subsequent life except that gathered from 25:12-18, but the presumption is that he afterward abandoned the religion of his father, since his descendants preserved no trace of it except the rite of circumcision.

## ABRAHAM'S HARDEST TEST (CHAP. 22)

The shock communicated to Abraham by this command may have been qualified by the fact that the sacrifice of human beings, and even one's own children, was not unknown to heathenism; but this could not have explained his patient obedience had it not been for that faith mentioned in ~~<8117>~~Hebrews 11:17-19. He knew that God's honor and faithfulness were involved in the preservation or renewal of the life of Isaac, and reposed confidently in that fact. Indeed, there is reason to believe from verse 8 that he foresaw the very means by which God would interpose for his son.

That verse is a beautiful foreshadowing of the substitutionary work of Christ. Transpose the emphasis, and we learn that God is the source or originator of our salvation through Christ — "God will Himself provide a lamb"; that God had as much necessity for Christ as we, since He purposed to redeem us — "God will provide Himself a lamb"; and that God is the provision as well as the provider — "God will provide Himself," i.e., He is the lamb!

Note several other interesting things:

- (1) that Solomon built the temple to Jehovah on Matthew Moriah (~~<4401>~~2 Chronicles 3:1), and that the eternal Father afterward sacrificed His only begotten Son in the same place;
- (2) this circumstance of the sacrifice of the Son of God for the sins of men silences the charge of infidelity that it was barbarous for God to command Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. If it was not barbarous for God to sacrifice Christ, neither was it barbarous that it should have been prefigured in the history of Abraham; and
- (3) Isaac himself becomes a notable type of Christ, especially in the meek and submissive spirit shown throughout, and when we remember that although called a "lad" he was presumably twenty-five years old at this time (compare ~~<8101>~~John 10:18).

What new name of God is suggested by this event (v. 14)? This means "Jehovah will see" or "Jehovah will provide." How does God now further confirm His promise and covenant (v. 16)? Note the marginal references to <sup><9430></sup>Psalm 105:9, <sup><0173></sup>Luke 1:73, <sup><8063></sup>Hebrews 6:13-14. What additional promise or prediction is now added to the original one (v. 17)? The gate of ancient cities being the strongest part of the wall and the most stoutly defended, to possess it was to possess the city itself.

Do not pass this lesson without observing how Abraham showed his faith by his works (<sup><3021></sup>James 2:21-24). "All our righteousness are as filthy rags" (<sup><2306></sup>Isaiah 64:6) as a ground of merit before God, but as the fruit of our faith obedience is of great price. Abraham's faith without the works of obedience would have been a lie, while his work without faith would, in this case, have been a sin. The virtue of this act consisted in the fact that he obeyed God.

### THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH (CHAP. 23)

That Sarah should have died not in Beersheba but in Hebron, and that Abraham should have "come" to mourn for her, are facts which the record nowhere explains; but the chapter affords an insight into the customs of the orientals of this period. For "the children of Heth" compare <sup><0105></sup>Genesis 10:15, etc. It will be seen by verse 10 that these people were the Hittites whom Joshua (1:4) mentions as occupying a great territory in that day, of whom the Egyptian and Assyrian monuments speak as a cultured and powerful nation of antiquity, although until recently critics were disposed to say that they never existed because secular history had lost sight of them.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the courteous formality of this occasion meant that Ephron intended to give Abraham the field for nothing. It was the oriental way of raising the price, so that in the end Abraham paid many times its value. Four hundred shekels of silver were equal to about \$240 of our money, the value of which at that time would be five or ten times as much.

### QUESTIONS

1. Name books and chapters of the New Testament which refer allegorically to Sarah and Hagar.

2. Name books and chapters which show Abraham's faith in the resurrection.
3. In what three ways does <sup><0218></sup>Genesis 22:8 foreshadow the work of Christ?
4. What three events are associated with Mr. Moriah?
5. Give chapter and verse which speak of Abraham's fruit of faith.

## GENESIS 24-25 — ISAAC'S MARRIAGE, ABRAHAM'S DEATH

In Abraham's time, communications between families separated by long distances were few and far between. But he seems to have gotten news from his brother's home sometime after the birth of Isaac, as recorded at the close of chapter 22, linking that chapter to the one we are now considering.

### SELECTING THE BRIDE (24:1-52)

Notice the preparation made by Abraham for Isaac's marriage (vv. 1-9), the oath he administers to his servant, the condition he exacts, the prohibition he places upon him, the assurances he gives him, the exemption he grants. It may not at first appear why Abraham is so solicitous that Isaac's wife shall be taken from his own people rather than the Canaanites, since both were idolaters. But the evil traits of the Canaanites, which afterwards caused them to be driven out of the land, must have been apparent to Abraham even then; moreover there may have been something in this people on the other side of the Euphrates making them more amenable to the purposes of God with reference to the coming Seed, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed. But it is always to be kept in mind that Abraham was under the guidance of God, and that there was more than man's wisdom or foresight in this transaction.

Notice the preparation made by the servant for his journey (vv. 10-14), and observe that the gifts were a dowry for the expected bride, to be paid, however, in accordance with oriental custom, not to her but to her father. How does the servant show his knowledge of the true God? How does his prayer illustrate <sup><0185></sup>Proverbs 3:5-6? And yet there is another side to the matter, for it is ill-advised to leave the decisions of life to the arbitrament

of signs, and grievous errors have arisen from accrediting God with the outcome of them. When we have the Word of God, the Spirit of God and providences of God for our guides, and the throne of grace open to our appeals, it is expected and doubtless salutary that we bear the responsibility of our own decisions in difficult places. Indeed, we are likely to show more reverence for and confidence in God's guidance in this way than in the other.

Notice the facts about Rebekah in verses 15-28.

Notice the servant's faithfulness in verses 29-52. Do we get a touch of Laban's character in verses 30-31? How does it impress you? How does the servant testify to Abraham and his son in verses 35-36? What is the result of the embassy so far as the father and brother of Rebekah are concerned? Which of the two seems to assume the more importance?

### **ACCEPTING THE HUSBAND (24:53-61)**

Notice the additional gifts now presented to Rebekah. But who else are also remembered? What objection is interposed, by whom, and why? Who settles the question, and how? What blessing is pronounced upon her? Do you think it has been, or will be, fulfilled?

### **THE MARRIAGE RITE (24:62-67)**

Notice how Isaac is represented in verse 63. Was he thinking about his bride? Notice the action of Rebekah, which was an indication of the inferiority to men with which women were then regarded. It would have been improper for Rebekah to have approached her future husband either unveiled or riding, instead of walking. What title did the servant give to Isaac, and what report did he make to him? In what did the wedding ceremony consist? What must have been the significance to the whole camp in this act of Isaac in bringing Rebekah "into his mother Sarah's tent?" Did it now show that she had now come into that place of importance and authority theretofore occupied by Sarah, and belonging by right to her, who was the recognized wife of the head of the clan?

### **THE SYMBOLISM OF THE TRANSACTION**

We have, in this beautiful story, a striking type of the union between Christ and His bride, the Church:

- (1) Abraham arranged the marriage for Isaac, and so the Father has made the marriage for Christ (~~407~~ Matthew 22:1-2);
- (2) The servant selected the bride, and so the Holy Spirit calls out the Church (~~461~~ 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:3, 13);
- (3) The plan of the servant was simply to tell who his master was, and how he had honored his son, and so the Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them unto us (~~456~~ John 15:26; 16:13-15).

See further the free agency of the bride in accepting Isaac, and the expression of her purpose in the words "I will go"; also, the separation from loved ones, but the compensation for all in anticipation.

Observe, as well, Isaac's coming out to meet her in the eventide, with its suggestion of Christ's return for His Church at the close of the present age (~~841~~ John 14:1-3); and even his leading Rebekah into his mother's tent, how it foreshadows the place of authority and glory the Church shall have when she reigns with Christ over the millennial earth (~~408~~ Matthew 19:28; ~~461~~ 1 Corinthians 6:2; ~~500~~ Colossians 3:4; ~~604~~ Revelation 20:4-6).

### THE DEATH OF ABRAHAM (25:1-10)

It is presumable that Abraham's relationship to Keturah was entered into sometime before the marriage of Isaac, and indeed it may have been before his birth. This seems probable, since verse 6, as well as ~~1012~~ 1 Chronicles 1:32, speaks of her as his concubine, and not his wife. The occasion for the allusion to the matter is suggested by the servant's remark in the preceding chapter concerning the possessions of Isaac (compare ~~0286~~ Genesis 24:36 with 25:5). In other words, the gifts to the offspring of Keturah and the settlement of the latter in the east were matters that had been attended to before the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah.

Note the age of Abraham (v. 7), and the way in which his departure from this life is designated (v. 8), affording an intimation of the conscious and sentient condition of the dead while awaiting the resurrection of their bodies.

### QUESTIONS

1. What connection do you see between chapters 22 and 24?



2. Can you give any reasons for Abraham's solicitude about the wife of Isaac?
3. Can you quote from memory <sup><1885></sup>Proverbs 3:5-6?
4. Can you name four or five features in which the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah symbolizes the union of Christ and His Church?
5. Recall three or four features in which Abraham's life-story illustrates <sup><800></sup>Romans 4:20, last clause.

## GENESIS 25-27 — JACOB AND ESAU

### THE DEFRAUDED BIRTHRIGHT (25:19-34)

As we read the introductory part of this chapter, we are impressed that many of the mothers of the notable men of the Bible were for a long while childless: Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, and the mothers of Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. Was this that their faith might be proved? We wonder, too, what is meant by the statement that Rebekah "went to inquire of Jehovah." There seems to have been some way, even in that early time, where individuals could communicate with God. As Abraham was a prophet, and living not far from her, it has been suggested that she may have gone to inquire of the Lord through him.

In considering verse 23, be careful not to charge God with partiality in the choice of Jacob, and it will save us from so doing if we remember that

- (1) on the natural plane of things, if there be two nations one is likely to be stronger than the other;
- (2) God not only foresees this but has the right to pre-determine it, especially when the blessing of all the nations is involved therein; and
- (3) this determination in the present case brought no hardship upon the weaker nation as such, nor did it prevent any of its individuals for receiving all the blessings of the life to come.

And yet this by no means justifies the meanness of Jacob, any more than the recklessness of Esau. Neither brother distinguishes himself in the transaction, while Jacob's conduct is only another illustration of an attempt

to assist God in the fulfillment of His promises. Patience would have gotten him the birthright with honor to himself as well as glory to God.

### **HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF (26:1-33)**

How much of this chapter reminds us of the previous one in the life of Abraham! There is little to be explained, but the facts should be noted.

The well called Rehoboth still remains strengthened with masonry of immense proportions and great antiquity. It is believed that it is the well which Isaac dug, although the country is now a desert in contrast to its fruitfulness in his time. We may add that at present there are two old wells in Beersheba, three hundred yards apart, and Dr. Edward Robinson gives his opinion that the larger may be the famous well of Abraham, while possibly the second may be that which Isaac dug when the former was stopped up by the Philistines. The locality still bears the same name, only in Arabic form.

### **THE DEFRAUDED BLESSING (27:1-40)**

The closing verse of chapter 26 gave us a further insight into Esau's character, qualifying our sympathy for him. His purpose in marrying the daughters of the Canaanite princes was doubtless to increase his worldly importance, a circumstance opposed to the divine purpose in the separation of Abraham and his seed from the other nations. If the descendants of Abraham were the daughters of the heathen Canaanites, they would soon lose the traditions of their family and every trace of their heavenly calling. As a matter of fact, this became true in the case of the descendants of Esau, who were always the enemies of Israel and figure in the prophets as the type of the enemies of God.

We can hardly believe, however, that Isaac was entirely without blame in this case. But who can justify Rebekah, to say nothing of Jacob? Surely the goodness of God is of grace, and these things show that He has a plan to carry out in which He is simply using men as He finds them, and subsequently conforming them to Himself as His sovereign will may determine.

Notice that the blessings of Isaac on Jacob were a formal transmission of the original promise of God to Abraham (28:29), which when once transmitted could not be recalled (vv. 34-38). Esau is blessed, but it is not

the blessing which he receives. Notice the differences between his blessing and that of Jacob. There is an intimation that Esau — that is, the nation that should spring from him — would at some time break from his brother's yoke, but later prophecies show that this freedom would be only for a season. In connection with Esau's conduct compare <sup><8215></sup>Hebrews 12:15-17.

Note in passing that Herod the Great, the last king of Judah, was a descendant of Esau, an Idumean on the side of both father and mother, a circumstance, which was the foundation for that irreconcilable hatred with which the Jews regarded him during his long reign.

### JACOB'S FLIGHT (27:41-28:22)

What was the cause of Jacob's flight (27:41-45)? The excuse for it (27:46 - 28:5)? At what place is he next found (v. 10)? What did he see in his dream? Whom did he see, and why? How did the speaker introduce Himself? Do you recognize the promise given him? What particular addendum of a personal character is attached (v. 15)? What effect had this on Jacob? How did he express his feelings? What did he name the place? (Bethel means "The House of God.") Compare <sup><415></sup>John 1:51, <sup><8014></sup>Hebrews 1:14, and <sup><2150></sup>Luke 15:10, and recall that the beautiful hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee" is based upon this impressive incident in Jacob's life. For the pious servants of God this dream threw a flood of light upon the certainty of heaven, of which they had known little or nothing until that time, as well as the facile communication there might be between heaven and earth, and the profound interest which God and the holy angles felt in the affairs of men. What vow did Jacob offer? In the consideration of this vow, which was entirely voluntary on his part, observe that "if" does not necessarily express a doubt in his mind, since it might be translated "since," or "so then." It may be viewed as his acceptance of the divine promise, so that from that moment Jehovah did in some sense become his God, as well as He had been the God of Abraham and Isaac.

We are accustomed to speak of the selfish proposition of Jacob in verse 22, last clause. But before casting the mote out of his eye, should we not cast the beam out of our own? With all the knowledge of God we possess does our character shine brighter? Do we not still use the "if" in the face of the promises? And do we give even as much as a tenth of our possessions to Him, notwithstanding the richer blessings we enjoy? Is it not still true that

He is dealing with us on the principle of grace, and not merit? God sometimes consents to call Himself by the name "the God of Jacob." What unutterable comfort it should bring to us!

## QUESTIONS

1. on what grounds is God released from the charge of partiality in the choice of Jacob?
2. In what ways does Isaac's life and character differ from Abraham's?
3. What name is sometimes given to Esau's descendants?
4. What is the meaning of Bethel?
5. How would you explain God's patience with Jacob?

## GENESIS 29-31 — JACOB AND LABAN

### THEIR FIRST MEETING (29:1-14)

Jacob's journey to Haran, his mother's country, was first to the north and then the east, re-traversing the original course of his grandfather Abraham. As he nears its termination; his attention is attracted by the shepherds with their flocks around a well, whose mouth is covered with a stone. Inquiry reveals that they belong to Haran, and are acquainted with his uncle Laban. Rachel, his daughter and the keeper of his sheep, will be there presently, for her they are waiting, since their custom is not to remove the stone or water the flocks till all are gathered. Rachel appears, and it is a case of love at first sight on Jacob's part, if one may judge by his action in rolling the stone from the well and watering her sheep, to say nothing of the kiss he bestows upon her. As another observes, the morals of these simple folk were good, and the estimation in which they held the honor of women was high, for a young and beautiful girl like Rachel might expose herself to the hazards of pastoral life without risk. But among the ancient Greeks it was the custom for daughters of princes to perform this office, and even today among the Arabs unmarried women expose themselves without harm to the same class of dangers. The personal habits of people make a great difference in their national customs.

Anstey shows that Jacob was seventy-seven years of age at this time. Rachel's enthusiasm in carrying the news to her father reminds us of her

aunt, Rebekah, at an earlier time. Though Jacob calls himself her father's brother, we know after the oriental fashion he means his nephew. What a talk they had around the family hearth as he rehearsed the story of the mother he loved so truly since she left her home long before! A month has passed before they settle down again to prosaic things (v. 14).

### **THEIR FIRST CONTRACT (29:15-30:24)**

The seven years Jacob serves for Rachel are a heavy burden in one sense, but a light one in another. But how he is deceived at the end of it, when he begins to reap what he had sown! All this is part of God's plan for his conviction, conversion, sanctification, and preparation for His great purpose on behalf of Israel and the whole world later on. Happily Jacob is not obliged to wait another seven years before marrying Rachel, but receives that part of his compensation in advance (vv. 27-28).

One cannot read this story without being impressed with the use God made of the envy of these sisters for building up the house of Jacob and of Israel. We meet some indelicate things here, but we should remember that these histories were written not from our point of view but in the style of the people of the past. It is desirable to become familiar with the names of Jacob's twelve sons, since they become so prominent in the history of Israel and the world. Notice who was the mother of Levi and of Judah, and also of Joseph (29:24-35; 30:24). The polygamy and concubinage spoken of are not only contrary to the Gospel, but not to be regarded as approved of God at any time (~~30:14~~ Malachi 2:14-15; ~~30:9~~ Matthew 19:3-9), but in accordance with the customs of those times. Notably, Isaac seems to have remained monogamous.

### **THEIR SECOND CONTRACT (30:25-31:16)**

As one reads the story of this section he feels little sympathy for Laban, who deserved the punishment he received, but wonders at Jacob's smartness until he reads his explanation (31:4-13), and learns that God interposed on his behalf, and prompted him in what he did. This is in fulfillment of the original promise of blessing and cursing, which was carried out in the later history of Israel, and will be very markedly fulfilled at the end of this age and throughout the millennium. There is a divine reason why the Jew of today holds the money bags of the world, and why he is such a factor in our commercial centers.

Oh, you treacherous and crafty Laban, type of the Gentile oppressor of Israel in all time, do you think you can circumvent Jehovah by removing all the speckled goats and black sheep from your flocks that Jacob may have none (vv. 34-36)? Place three day's journey between yourself and Jacob, but leave Jacob to God, and he will ask no more (31:5)!

It is interesting that Jacob has the sympathy of his wives in the issue between him and their father, and that they support him in his purpose to return to his own land. What was the inspiration and the encouragement of this purpose (v. 13)?

### **THEIR SEPARATION (31:17-55)**

What advantage of Laban did Jacob take at this juncture (vv. 19-20)? What shows Jacob's wives to have been idolaters at this time? How does this further indicate the divine patience and long-suffering? How does it indicate that God has a purpose of grace He is seeking in the earth independent of the conscious and willing cooperation of His creatures?

Look on the map and determine what river Jacob crossed going from Haran into Gilead (a distance of probably 350 miles). How does God interpose for Jacob (v. 24)? Where have we seen a similar revelation of God to a heathen? Do you think Laban was sincere in verse 27? What teaching do we obtain of the responsibilities and hardships of the shepherd's life in verses 38-40? Notice Jacob's testimony to God's great favor to him (v. 42), and the distinction of faith in Jacob's oath as compared with that of Laban.

It is desirable to add that the names which Laban and Jacob gave to the locality of their covenant means the same thing in the Aramaic and Hebrew tongues, "the heap of witness," while Mizpah means "the watch tower."

How does the conclusion of this story illustrate ~~2167~~ Proverbs 16:7?

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Rehearse the story of Jacob from the time of leaving home until he met Laban.
2. Try to recall the story he would have to tell Laban.
3. Give the substance of the references to Malachi and Matthew.
4. Of what is Laban a type in all the generations?

5. Memorize ~~1007~~ Proverbs 16:7, with chapter and verse.

## GENESIS 32-33 — JACOB BECOMES ISRAEL

### MEETING WITH THE ANGELS (32:1-2)

Filled with wonders is this lesson! The appearance of the angels, the divine wrestling, the transformation of Esau — how much we need the Holy Spirit to understand the meaning of these things!

Be sure to identify these places: Galeed or Mizpah of the preceding chapter, and Mahanaim, Peniel and the river Jabbok named in this, are all on the east of the Jordan, not far from what was known later as Ramoth-Gilead.

How condescending of God to send His angels to encourage such a man as Jacob at this crisis! Mahanaim means "two heaps" or "two camps," with perhaps the angels as one camp and the household of Jacob as the other.

### MEETING WITH GOD (32:3-32)

Where was Esau dwelling at this time (v. 3)? What shows Jacob's fear of him (vv. 4-8)? What reason had he for the increase of this fear (v. 6)? To whom did he appeal, and how (vv. 9-12)?

Study this prayer, the first of its kind in the Bible (Abraham's was intercessory and of the nature of a dialogue, but this is a personal supplication). Its elements are adoration, confession, thanksgiving, petition and pleading. Discover these divisions for yourself and locate them in the verses.

How does Jacob plan to propitiate Esau (v. 13)? What kind of present does he prepare for him (vv. 14-15)? How many droves in all do you think there were (vv. 16-20)? Can you picture these five droves separated and appearing before Esau's astonished eyes at intervals? Was not the plan well adapted from a human point of view to have the desired effect?

But the incident following shows that something must be done in Jacob's soul and then the propitiation of his brother will be brought about in another way. In this incident we have another theophany such as we have seen before, but in some respects more remarkable still. To think that

Jehovah should not only appear in human form but wrestle as a man with a man! What is the meaning of it all?

For one thing it shows Jacob's dogged determination to have his own way — a kind of symbolic action illustrative of his whole career. What a schemer and planner he was from the time he defrauded Esau of his birthright until now! While wrestling with God he was in spirit wrestling with Esau probably, seeking in his own strength and by his own schemes to make peace with him, but he is to learn that his strength is made perfect in weakness. In God's plan and purpose he cannot prevail with men until he first prevails with God, and with God he cannot prevail until he ceases his own efforts and simply clings to Him for support and blessing. But this he will not do until God afflicts and makes it impossible for him to do otherwise. What a lesson for us! May God help us to translate it into our experience!

### **MEETING WITH ESAU (CHAP. 33)**

The action of Esau, especially verse 4, seems to indicate a supernatural work on him, changing his mind toward Jacob. It is not the result of Jacob's plan so much as God's grace, whether Jacob realizes it as yet or not.

His caution (vv. 12-15) still shows a certain fear of Esau, shown further by the fact that he does not follow him to Seir (vv. 14), but turns sharply to the east, locating in Succoth, and then in Schechem. Notice the altar he erects and the recognition of his own new name "God, the God of Israel."

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Identify the localities.
2. Analyze Jacob's prayer.
3. Picture in your mind his plan of propitiation of Esau.
4. Compare yourself with Jacob as a planner.
5. Have you learned Jacob's secret of prevailing with God?



## GENESIS 34-36 — JACOB'S CHILDREN, ESAU'S MEMOIRS

### THE WICKEDNESS OF JACOB'S SONS (CHAP. 34)

In the last lesson Jacob's altar at Shechem proclaims God to be his God, but (as another says) it is evident he has not gotten the power of this name for he is walking in his own ways still, as his house at Succoth and his purchase at Shechem testify. So new sorrow and discipline must come.

Dinah represents the young women of today who want to see the world and have their fling. Her conduct was indiscreet, to say the least, and dearly did all concerned pay the consequences. One can feel only utter condemnation for the beastliness of Shechem, and yet the reparation he and his father offered to make was honorable (vv. 3-12), and dignifies them in comparison with Jacob's sons and many modern offenders of high repute.

No justification can be found for the criminality of Jacob's sons (vv. 18-29). That Jacob appreciated its enormity, not only his fear (v. 30) but also his later loathing of it and his curse upon its instigators (49:5-7), show.

In our indignation we ask why did not God destroy these sons of Jacob instead of continuing His interest in them and even prospering them? In reply, remember that He did this not for their sake but for the world's sake, our sake. His plan of redemption for the world involved the preservation of Israel, and to have destroyed them would have been to destroy the root of the tree whose leaves ultimately would be for the healing of the nation. It is this that explains God's patience in later periods of Israel's history, and indeed His dealings with us; for His own name's sake He does many things, or refrains from doing them.

### THE LATER JOURNEYS OF JACOB (CHAP. 35)

God comes to Jacob's relief in directing him to what place? What marks this as a time of religious crisis in his family (vv. 2-4)? If he had forgotten God's house in building his own, God now leads him to a higher plane where he sees his obligation to build God's house first. What was done with all their emblems of idolatry? In what way does God put Jacob's fear upon his enemies (v. 5)?

How further is God's goodness shown to Jacob (v. 9)? What assurance is renewed to him (v. 10)? What are the Hebrew words for God Almighty, and their meaning (compare with the lesson on Genesis 17)? What relation do you perceive between this name and the promise which follows? In what way does God transfer the original blessing to Jacob (v. 11)? How does the language (v. 13) show that we have here another theophany?

Jacob seems to be gradually approaching the old homestead. What place is now reached, and what later name is given it (vv. 16-19)? What domestic events occurred here? It is interesting to note that the pillar erected to Rachel was in existence at the time of Moses, three hundred years later, according to the testimony of verse 20. It is mentioned again four hundred years afterward in ~~1~~1 Samuel 10:2. The Mohammedans still mark the site with a monument of solid masonry.

What interesting circumstance is mentioned in verse 27? How does verse 29 testify to the reconciliation of Jacob and Esau? In coming to the end of Isaac's life it is worth while to note that his blessing, unlike Jacob's, was uniform and unbroken, doubtless the recompense of the obedience with which his life began. Note also how God preserved him in life so that he did not give up his place as a witness of God's truth in the earth until Jacob, the son of promise, had returned and was made ready to fill that place. Attention had better be called as well to the phrase, "was gathered unto his people" (v. 29), which was used of Abraham (25:7), and points to a belief even in those early days of a continued existence of men after death.

### **THE MEMOIRS OF ESAU (CHAP. 36)**

We can spare but a paragraph or two for this chapter, which is inserted doubtless because of the natural relations between Jacob and Esau, and the subsequent relations of their respective descendants.

It is noticeable that the author takes pains to identify Esau with Edom, mentioning the fact a number of times. In the second place, we see from the origin of Esau's wives that "Canaanites" includes the Hittites, Hivites and Horites. In the third place, we should not be misled by the word dukes, which simply means chiefs, or heads of families or clans. In the fourth place, the reference to Esau's dwelling in Mount Seir (vv. 6-8) seems to refer to a second departure into that country after the return of Jacob and the death of Isaac. Finally, the reference in verse 31 to the "kings that

reigned in the land of Edom before there reigned any king over the children of Israel" seems to point to a later author than Moses since there were no kings in Israel until hundreds of years after his death. The entire paragraph with a few variations is found again in ~~1~~ 1 Chronicles 1:43-50, and some have thought that it was taken from thence and added to this chapter.

## QUESTIONS

1. Has Jacob yet become perfected?
2. Should we palliate wrong in those who stand in close relationship to God?
3. Can we give a reason for God's forbearance in the case of Jacob's sons?
4. Describe the religious crisis in Jacob's household at this time.
5. What corroborative evidence of the historicity of this lesson is found in modern times?

## GENESIS 37-47 — JOSEPH'S HISTORY

### DISPENSATIONAL ASPECT OF JACOB'S HISTORY

Following E W. Grant in the *Numerical Bible*, the life of Jacob gives as its lesson the story of that discipline by which the Spirit of God brings us from weakness to power, from nature's strength to that wholesome weakness in which alone is strength. But for this, natural strength must be crippled, which is provided for in two ways: in allowing us to realize the power of another nature (Esau) and in the direct dealing of God with our souls.

To this also correspond the two names which distinguish to two parts of Jacob's life, before and after these experiences have done their work. He is Jacob in his methods, however, long after his heart is set upon divine things, and is only Israel when, his human strength broken down, he halts upon his thigh. These two names — Jacob and Israel — are applied all through the Scriptures in a very beautiful manner to the nation which sprang from him, and of which he is the representative throughout. But of course the effect of God's discipline upon them cannot be read in their history hitherto, and awaits the fulfillment of prophecy concerning them.

Their past history has been that of Jacob, but it will yet be said of "Jacob and of Israel: What hath God wrought!" (<sup><0233></sup>Numbers 23:23).

Jacob's history divides itself into three parts — his early life in Canaan, his stay in Padan-aram, and his life again as restored to Canaan; just as the history of the nation dispensationally divides itself into their first occupation of the land, their present dispersion, and their future and perpetual enjoyment of it when God brings them back again.

We find a kind of parallel between the first part of Jacob's life and that of the nation in his dream at Bethel when he is just about to leave the land, as we compare that dream with the application which Christ makes of it to Himself (<sup><0151></sup>John 1:51). Christ, as the Son of man, secures to Israel the care and ministrations of Jehovah while the nation is outcast from their inheritance, and when they shall with Nathanael's faith confess Christ as Son of God and King of Israel, they shall have in a more blessed way than ever their "house of God" on earth.

In the same way Jacob's history at Padan-aram suggests a parallel with the nation as they are now scattered from their land, for during the twenty years of Jacob's exile he enjoyed no such revelations of God's presence as he did before. During that time God deals with him as He is now dealing with the nation, as one for whom He has a purpose of blessing only to be reached through disciplinary sorrow. Like his descendants he is multiplied as the dust, while trampled into it. The nation today is enslaved, persecuted and yet preserved in order to merge in the end of the age into that place of wealth and power of which all the prophets speak.

Jacob's return to his own land, in its application to the nation, brings us into the field of prophecy. For the nation, as well as for him, Peniel must prepare the way to Bethel. That the nation may not fall into the hands of their enemies, God, whose name is yet unknown to them, must take them into His own hand, crippling the human strength with which they contend with Him that in weakness they may hold Him fast for blessing. Thus, broken down in repentance and purged from idolatry, the nation will have their second Bethel when God will reveal to them His name so long hidden, and confirm to them the promise to their father Abraham.

## QUESTIONS

1. What is the great lesson of Jacob's life?

2. Divide his history in three parts and apply it dispensationally.
3. Quote from memory ~~4015~~ John 1:51.
4. In what way does the Padan-aram experience foreshadow Israel's history today?
5. What event in Jacob's life foreshadows a similar one yet to follow in the history of Israel?

The general familiarity with these chapters warrants the grouping of them in one lesson, especially since little within our present scope requires explanation.

### **LOVED AND HATED (CHAP. 37)**

It may seem foolish for Joseph to have made known his dreams to his brethren, and thus increase their enmity against him, but we should consider God's purpose in the matter, whether Joseph understood it or not. In the outcome it was important that they should know these dreams, which were really prophecies, in advance of their fulfillment for the sake of the moral effect upon them.

In this chapter it will be seen that the merchantmen are called both Ishmaelites and Midianites, both being in the company, perhaps, as their territories were contiguous in Arabia.

### **SOLD INTO SLAVERY (CHAP. 39)**

Note the faith and piety of Joseph as indicated in verse 9, in language unlike anything hitherto recorded of the patriarchs. Note too that according to verse 20 Potiphar must have doubted the truth of his wife's charge, or else he would probably have executed Joseph.

### **FALSELY IMPRISONED (CHAP. 40)**

This chapter is chiefly notable for the further evidence it gives of Joseph's intimate acquaintance with and faith in God, and the close dealings of God with him in the revelation of these things.

### **EXALTED TO THE THRONE (CHAP. 41)**

Note Pharaoh's testimony to Joseph's power with God (v. 38), not that he himself knew the true God, but that he witnessed to the power Joseph had

with the God he (Joseph) served. How does this incident in Joseph's life illustrate <sup><5418></sup>1 Timothy 4:8, last clause?

The name given Joseph by Pharaoh merits attention despite the difficulty in its interpretation. The Revised Version spells it "Zaphenath-Paneah," but it is not determined whether it is of Hebrew, Egyptian or Coptic derivation. If the first, it may mean "Revealer of secrets"; if the second, "Bread of Life"; if the third, "Savior of the world," all bearing on the same thought and any of them both significant and appropriate.

### **DEALING WITH HIS BRETHREN (CHAPS. 42-44)**

The details of these chapters show the purpose of Joseph to multiply unlooked for events and complicate the situation for his brethren, both to awaken their conviction of wrong-doing in the past and an expectation of something still more mysterious, whether good or bad, in the future — thus preparing them for the great revelation soon to be made.

In <sup><0427></sup>Genesis 42:17-18 the reference to the three days is important for its bearing on the death and resurrection of Christ. It will be well to note, for example, the vague way of the Hebrews in using the words. According to our usage, had Joseph's brethren been imprisoned three days it would not have been until the fourth day that he changed his plan, but instead of that they were shut up by two nights and the intermediate day, with parts of the first and third days. This was the time Jesus was in the grave, so that there is no more reason to accuse the Bible of inaccuracy or contradiction in the one case than in the other.

### **REVEALING HIMSELF TO HIS BRETHREN (CHAP. 45)**

Why was Pharaoh so pleased to have Jacob and his family settle in Egypt? To show appreciation of Joseph? Yes, and for other reasons. It was not merely sixty-six souls that constituted the whole encampment of Jacob, but between three and four thousand souls, if we count all their dependents, which was a valuable accession to any nation when we consider the character of the people.

And there may have been another reason, if it be true that the reigning dynasty at this time was the Hyksos or Shepherd kings, i.e., Syrians or Asiatics who centuries before had invaded and seized upon the kingdom, and so were unpopular with the native races. It would be a great advantage

to them to have so powerful an accession of Asiatics as Jacob's tribe represented, not only to increase their riches but to give additional firmness to the throne against the discontent and disturbance of the native races.

### **SETTLING THE FAMILY IN GOSHEN (CHAPS. 46-48)**

Note the suitability of Goshen as a place of settlement for the Israelites. In the first place, it afforded good pasturage and they were shepherds, but in some parts of it there was excellent tillage as well. In the next place, its location near the Isthmus of Suez made it easy to depart from later on when the necessity was so great. And last, but not least, it was a location where the least offense would be given to the native races, and there was reason for such offense because shepherds were held in abomination by them. Their subjugation by a shepherd race explains this in part, but there was another reason in that the Egyptians for religious reasons did not eat flesh. They worshipped the beasts which the Israelites ate and offered in sacrifice to God.

How long did Jacob live in Egypt (47:28)? What solemn promise did he extract from Joseph just prior to his death (vv. 29-31)? Do you think this expressed only the natural desire to be buried with his own people, or did it express faith in the divine promise that his seed should ultimately inherit Canaan?

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What name did Pharaoh give Joseph, and what are its possible meanings?
2. How does this lesson throw light on the period that Christ remained in the grave?
3. What probable dynasty of Pharaoh's is before us in this lesson?
4. Give some reasons for Pharaoh's satisfaction in welcoming the Israelites to Egypt.
5. What made Goshen a desirable locality for them?

### **TYPICAL AND DISPENSATIONAL ASPECTS OF JOSEPH'S HISTORY**

The life of Joseph more than any other patriarch suggests that of Christ and shadows forth the history of Israel as a nation.

The first view we have of him he is loved of his father and hated by his brethren, and there are three things for which his brethren hated him, namely: the love of his father for him, his separation from them in a moral sense, and his dreams in which his future supremacy is announced. There were the same things for which Christ was hated by his brethren after the flesh: His Father's love; His separation from them (<sup><3157></sup>John 15:17-25); and the announcement of His future glory (<sup><1257></sup>Matthew 27:57-68).

Joseph is conspired against and sold, and it is his love-mission to his brethren, as sent by his father, that gives occasion for this. How like our Savior in His coming unto Israel! Joseph is cast into a pit at first, but instead of putting him to death his brethren sell him to the Ishmaelites. So the Jews, knowing it was not lawful for them to put any man to death, transferred Jesus to the Gentiles.

Joseph is a slave in the house of the Egyptian, but that house is greatly blessed of God because he is in it: a type of Christ's ministry to the world while He abode therein. And yet Joseph's goodness to the Egyptian did not avail in the face of false accusation, nor did that of Christ to the world. The former is cast into prison where again all things come under his hand, and so Christ descends into a darker prison-house where He manifests Himself as master of all there (<sup><5125></sup>Colossians 2:15; <sup><1188></sup>1 Peter 3:18-22).

Joseph's humiliation issues in exaltation; the parallel to which in Christ's case is as we see Him raised from the grave to the throne of glory. "God sent me before you to preserve life," said Joseph to his brethren, and Jesus at the right hand of God in ministering in the spiritual sense, to His brethren of Israel to whom He is as yet unknown.

But connected with Joseph's exaltation he enters a new relationship — that of marriage with a Gentile woman, suggesting the unique relationship of Christ to His church, compose chiefly of Gentile believers.

Now comes the time of famine which speaks of the period at the end of this age, a literal seven years as indicated by <sup><2101></sup>Daniel 9, when the church shall have been translated to meet her Lord in the air, and Israel will be preparing through trial to recognize and receive her rejected Lord.



## BENJAMIN BLENDED WITH JOSEPH

At this point Benjamin comes into view as blended with Joseph in the prototypical relation. All at last is made to depend upon Benjamin. No one person could be a full type of Christ, and Benjamin is brought in to supplement what is lacking in Joseph. Benjamin means the son of my right hand, and he represents the Messiah of power for whom the Jews have always been looking. But Benjamin, before he was called by his father the name which means the son of my right hand, was named by his mother Benoni, which means the son of my sorrow. It was necessary for Christ to be the sufferer before He could be the conqueror. Christ, known to us as the rejected One, is now exalted and seated at the right hand of God, and he is the One whom Israel does not know. A Christ triumphant and reigning over the earth is the one for whom they have always looked; the Sufferer for whom they did not look but who must precede the Conqueror they have refused.

But power does not lie with Benjamin for whom his brethren are looking, but with Joseph whom they have refused. As a conquering Messiah Christ has been prophesied to them, and as such He longs to display Himself in their behalf. This he cannot do without atonement for the sin that led them to their refusal of Him. For this they must be brought to repentance, and God sends them into an agony for their ideal Messiah that makes them ready to receive the true one. In the last great sorrow that shall overtake Israel as a nation this shall be accomplished. Before Him whom they do not know they shall plead for the Benjamin who has been lost to them, and in the agony of that hour, while they are still pleading for the ideal conquering Messiah, the heavens shall suddenly open and they shall be overwhelmed by a revelation of the Christ they refused (<sup>38210</sup>Zechariah 12:10).

## GENESIS 48-50 — CLOSE OF THE PATRIARCHAL AGE

With the history of Joseph, Genesis concludes what is called the patriarchal age. Yet there are two or three facts for consideration before passing to the next book.

## THE LIFE OF JUDAH

For example, Joseph's history was interrupted almost at the beginning by that of his brother Judah (chap. 38). Judah's history is shameful, but recorded because it bears upon the genealogy of Jesus, since Tamar, prostitute though she were, became an ancestress of our blessed Lord (~~400B~~ Matthew 1:3).

### JACOB BLESSING JOSEPH'S SONS (CHAP. 48)

Note the past and the future of Jacob's faith as enunciated in verses 3-4: his adoption of the two sons of Joseph, and how in some sense they were to receive the blessing forfeited by Reuben and Simeon (see the following chapter and compare ~~300B~~ 1 Chronicles 5:1-2). By the adoption of these two sons the tribes of Israel were enlarged to thirteen, but by a special divine arrangement, as we shall see subsequently, that of Levi had no part in the division of the land of Canaan, and the nation was thus able to always preserve the original number, twelve.

Of the two sons of Joseph Jacob gave the pre-eminence to one contrary to the law of primogeniture and evidently by divine guidance, though for reasons we do not know. By and by we shall see a fulfillment of this predictive blessing on these sons, a kind of credal expression of Jacob (vv. 15-16). This is the earliest creed of the true faith on record, and suggests an example to us in these days when all sorts of people say they believe in God, meaning so many different things thereby. We should be careful that it be known in what God we believe, namely, "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," with all that the term implies. When in this blessing Jacob speaks of the "the Angel" who redeemed him, he means Jehovah himself, since (as we have learned) he is identical with the second person of the Trinity. Angel means the sent one (see ~~400A~~ Galatians 4:4-5).

Note the triumphant faith of Jacob through this closing transaction of his career. His assurance of the fulfillment of God's promises to His people takes away the fear of death from him and leads him to regard those promises greater than all the worldly glories enjoyed by Joseph and his sons as princes of Egypt. Observe also that he disposes of that which God has promised him for his descendants with as much confidence, as he would dispose of an earthly estate.

## JACOB'S PROPHECY OF THE TWELVE TRIBES (CHAP. 49)

In accordance with the curse on Reuben (vv. 3-4), his tribe never attained distinction in Israel. Simeon and Levi for the same reason were both divided and scattered in the later allotment of the land (vv. 5-7): see for the former, <sup><0600></sup>Joshua 19:1-9; <sup><4450></sup>2 Chronicles 15:9 and 34:6, and for the latter <sup><0650></sup>Numbers 35:7-8 and <sup><0650></sup>Joshua 21:1-42. Levi's curse was turned into a blessing, doubtless because of their righteous conduct, as will be seen later. Compare <sup><0225></sup>Exodus 32:25 and <sup><0530></sup>Deuteronomy 33:8-11.

The reason Judah obtained the preeminence (vv. 8-12) was not for his superior moral character (as we have seen) but for reasons known only to God. Judah means praise, and it is striking to see in the history of Israel how when Judah came to power in the time of David, the worship of Jehovah revived. David who came to Judah was himself the sweet psalmist of Israel who has given to the saints of every generation songs of praise that never grow old.

It is in connection with Judah (v. 10) that we have the clearest prophecy of the Redeemer since that of Eden (<sup><0015></sup>Genesis 3:15). His was to be the royal tribe, and the scepter should not depart from him nor the lawgiver (or the rulers' staff) from between his feet until Shiloh should come. Jews and Christians agree that Shiloh, "peace-maker," applies to Christ. It is noticeable that the tribe of Judah maintained at least the semblance of government in Israel until after the crucifixion, while since that time she has had no national existence. All agree in regarding this one of the strong evidences of the Messiahship of Jesus.

Zebulun, in fulfillment of the prediction in verse 13, dwelt on the Sea of Galilee, his border running back on the west and north to Sidon, Naphtali being contiguous. Their occupations and dangers as seamen made them courageous, and "they jeoparded their lives" in the battles of the Kingdom (<sup><3123></sup>1 Chronicles 12:33-34). The territory of Issachar was one of the most fertile in Canaan, explaining their pacific and industrious life, predicted in verses 14-15. The language concerning Dan is difficult to understand (vv. 16-17), but Asher's territory like that of the two other tribes mentioned was one of the best in Israel and corresponded with the meaning of his name, "happy" or "fortunate." Of Naphtali we have spoken in connection with Zebulun. The tribe of Benjamin seems to have been always warlike and cruel in character.

The death of Jacob calls attention to the fact that his last days were not only his most tranquil but those in which we see the work of his conversion and sanctification carried to its culminating point.

## **THE BURIAL OF JACOB AND THE DEATH OF JOSEPH (CHAP. 50)**

What period of time was devoted to the ceremonial worship for the grandees of Egypt (v. 3)? During this period Joseph was isolated from the court of Pharaoh, which accounts for his request of others (vv. 4-5).

How did Joseph's brethren exhibit needless fear on their return (vv. 15-16)? Do you think they spoke the truth in alluding to their father, or was it a ruse on their part? How does the circumstance illustrate the power of a guilty conscience? How does Joseph's reply illustrate the kindness of God to us in Christ (v. 21)? In what way does the circumstance suggest the ground of assurance for them who put their trust in Christ?

In what way did Joseph exhibit his faith in God's promise concerning Israel (vv. 24-25)? Compare ~~81122~~ Hebrews 11:22.

### **QUESTIONS**

1. Which of Joseph's sons received the preeminence in Jacob's blessing?
2. What important lesson is suggested by 48:15-16?
3. In what way has the meaning of Judah's name been fulfilled in history?
4. Quote the prophecy of ~~04410~~ Genesis 49:10, and show its application to Christ.
5. State the typical and dispensational aspects of Joseph's history as given in the last lesson.