

GENESIS

The Book of Beginnings

Dr. Brian J. Bailey

“Genesis: The Book of Beginnings”

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Table of Contents

Introduction

PART 1	–	<i>The Creation</i>	11
PART 2	–	<i>The Fall of Man</i>	33
PART 3	–	<i>The Plan of Redemption</i>	39
PART 4	–	<i>The Lines of Good and Evil</i>	43
PART 5	–	<i>The Flood</i>	53
PART 6	–	<i>The Dispersion of the Nations</i>	73
PART 7	–	<i>The Life of Abraham</i>	81
PART 8	–	<i>The Life of Isaac</i>	123
PART 9	–	<i>The Life of Jacob</i>	133
PART 10	–	<i>The Life of Joseph</i>	167

Conclusion

Introduction

Book of Beginnings

In the Jewish Bible, Genesis is called “The First Book of Moses” as the prophet Moses was the author of this precious book. The word *genesis* actually means “origin.” It is named *Genesis* because it has the seed thoughts and truths of all biblical doctrines, as well as the recording of the origin of good and evil in this world. Genesis is a book of beginnings.

- A. The beginning of heaven and earth
- B. The beginning of all animate and inanimate life (animals, vegetation, etc.)
- C. The beginning of man and woman, and marriage
- D. The beginning of sin in man
- E. The beginning of redemption by the shedding of blood, and promise of a coming Redeemer
- F. The beginning of war and murder
- G. The beginning of man again, after the earth was destroyed by a flood
- H. The beginning of the races, nationalities and languages at Babel
- I. The beginning of a special holy nation—with Abraham
- J. The beginning of the 12 tribes of Israel with the 12 sons of Jacob

The above beginnings (and many more) are *seeds* with numerous other seeds within them. We see the beginnings of creation, and the first family, followed by the entrance of sin into this world. Then God’s glorious plan of redemption is revealed. After that we see the lines of Cain and Seth, which formed the genealogy of the sons of men and the sons of God. Thus, we see the division between the children of the righteous and the children of the wicked.

After the judgment of the Flood in which Noah and his family were the only survivors, the Book of Genesis focuses upon Abraham and God’s desire for a new and separated nation. Thus, the lives of his descendants—Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, are treated extensively in this book.

It is important to understand *origins*. For example, when a doctor attempts to treat a disease, he first tries to locate the *source* of the problem in the body, which is why he does a case history of the patient. Similarly, when we are trying to solve someone’s spiritual problem, we have to find the root of his problem.

As a book of origins, Genesis is the source of everything. Therefore, it is essential to understand Genesis in order to comprehend the other parts of the Word of God. It is absolutely imperative to

understand God's *original intention* for man, for marriage, for sacrifice, for tests, and for everything else. Unless we understand the *original* purpose, we cannot properly interpret any subject in the Word of God.

A Message From the Beginning

In 1 John 3:11 it clearly states, "For this is the message that you have heard *from the beginning*, that we should love one another." What beginning is he talking about? Is he referring to the Law of Moses, or the teachings of Christ? The Apostle John is going all the way back to the first family, because in the next verse he says: "Not as Cain (this is the first family), who was of that wicked one..." Cain had chosen to harden his heart and listen to the voice of the wicked one. Therefore, he became like the wicked one. We must take heed to ourselves, for if we listen to the wrong people and to the adversary, we will become like them.

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous." People who do not live right are cursed and tormented with the spirit of jealousy. This terrible spirit vexes those whose motives and lives are corrupt, even as it did Cain.

The Apostle John is going back to *the beginning!* The message we have heard *from the beginning* goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. In Matthew 22:36-40, we see the Lord summed up all of the 31,102 verses of the Bible in just two phrases—How we treat others and how we treat God, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Everything stems from these two issues.

The way we treat others, the condition of our hearts, and our attitudes toward them, as well as the condition of our hearts, and our attitudes toward God—this is the message we have heard *from the beginning*. It is also the message of the new covenant.

In Matthew 7:12 the Lord said, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Certainly we will find that this is the greatest struggle of life. Keeping our hearts soft and our relationships open requires much effort, and a lot of grace. Even with pious saints, the greatest battle is in monitoring their words and attitudes toward others.

In His teachings, the Lord Jesus always went back *to the beginning* because He came to rescue man from *the fall* to bring him back to the original purpose. Matthew 19:3 says, “The Pharisees also came unto him tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” To answer their question, the Lord did not draw their attention to what Moses said on Mount Sinai (when he gave the Law thousands of years after Adam and Eve were formed), rather, He drew it back to the beginning to the Garden of Eden, to God’s *original purpose* for marriage.

Jesus said unto them, “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said [He is quoting from Genesis, chapter 2:24], For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” (Mt. 19:4-8). Christ was going back to the beginning and saying, “I have come to rescue fallen man to bring him back to the Father’s original purpose.”

There was no divorce or polygamy when God instituted marriage; they are a result of the fall. In this discourse with the Pharisees, the Lord Jesus Christ, in His new covenant, is actually outlawing divorce and polygamy. He is also outlawing hardness of heart and hatred, which is the cause of all divorce.

Geographical and Historical Settings of the Book of Genesis

Genesis spans a period of some 2300 years, a total that is more than all of the other 65 books in the Bible put together. Genesis covers the first 25 generations of man. It can be divided into the following geographical and historical settings:

1. Chapters 1 - 11 **The Age Before and After the Flood (4004 B.C. - 1996 B.C.)**

Location: The Fertile Crescent of Mesopotamia (meaning “the land between two rivers”—the Tigris and the Euphrates). This would be in the area of modern Iraq and Syria.

2. Chapters 12 - 36 **The Lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (1996 B.C. – 1689 B.C.)**

Location: The Land of Canaan (modern-day Israel)

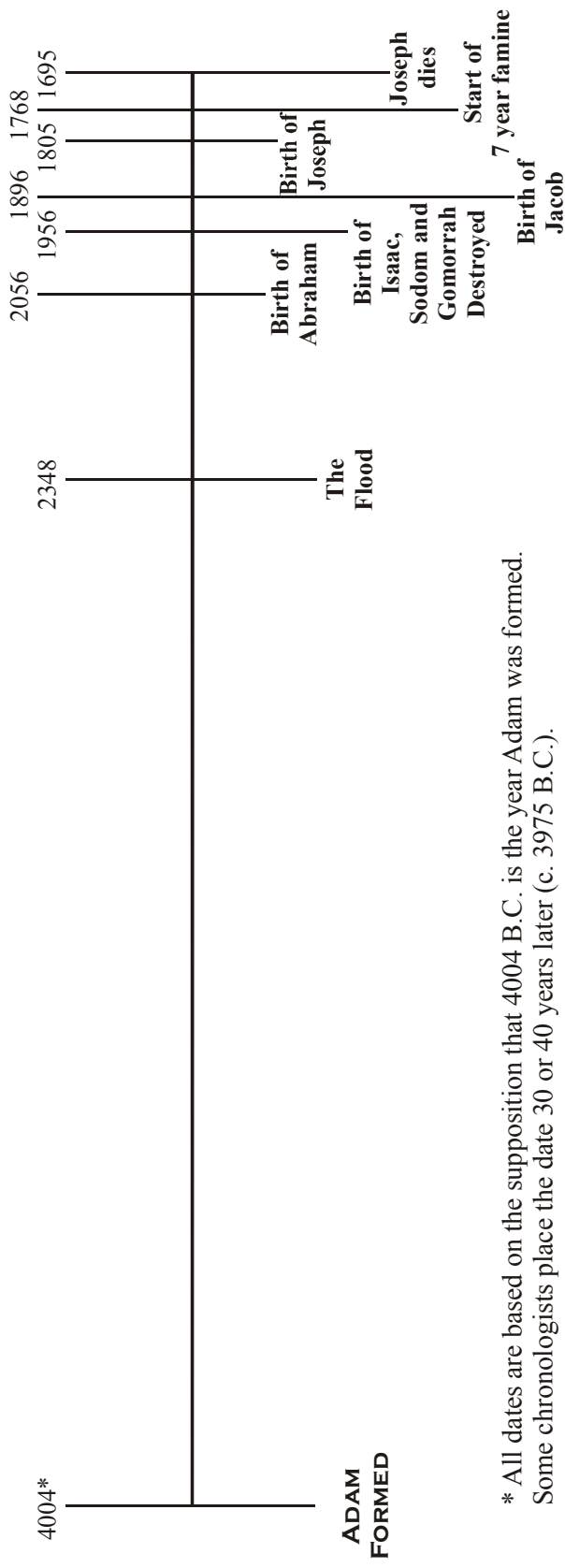
3. Chapters 37 - 50 **The Life of Joseph (1745 B.C. - 1635 B.C.)**

Location: The Land of Egypt

Chronology for Genesis

Genesis covers 25 generations

1. From Adam to Abraham - 20 Generations
2. From Abraham to the grandchildren of the 12 sons of Israel - 5 Generations



* All dates are based on the supposition that 4004 B.C. is the year Adam was formed. Some chronologists place the date 30 or 40 years later (c. 3975 B.C.).

- The earth may have had millions of people at the time of the Flood.
- Abraham was born 1948 years after Adam was formed. His nation was reborn in A.D. 1948.
- Noah lived another 12 generations after the Flood. He died when Abraham was 58 years old. Noah saw his seed turn from God, build Babel, and be scattered, beginning the nations of the earth.
- Shem, the son of Noah, lived an astounding 502 years after the Flood. Moreover, he had lived 98 years before the Flood and thus was well acquainted with pre-Flood conditions and life. He saw the birth and death of Abraham, and then lived for another 35 years. He died in 1846 B.C. Jacob and Esau were 50 years old when Shem died.

PART ONE

The Creation

1:1 - 2:25

Seven Days Equivalent to 7000 Years of Man

The Holy Scriptures commence with the seven days of creation. Moses and the Apostle Peter both declare that one day is like 1000 years with the Lord (2 Pet. 3:8, Ps. 90:4). From this we deduce that there are 7000 years allotted to man upon earth. The seven days of creation are prophetic of the 7000 years of man. Observe the chart on the *7000 Years of Man* on page 13. There were 7000 men who had not bowed the knee to Baal in Elijah's time (1 Ki. 19:18). This fact suggests that God always has preserved (and always will preserve) a faithful remnant during all the years of the history of man.

There were 4000 years (or 4 days) from Adam to Christ's first coming. There are 2000 years (or 2 days) from the time of Christ's first coming to His second coming. This is a total of 6000 years, or six days. Then follows a day of rest which is the 1000 year reign of Christ upon the earth. Satan and all the evil spirits will be bound, and there will be peace on earth. Also the Bride of Christ (the Church) will enter into rest with her Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Seven Is a Key Number in Scripture

Besides the seven days of chapter one, the Book of Genesis is an account in itself of the number seven as seen in the lives of *seven* righteous men of faith—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. It is interesting that the number seven, in one form or another, flows throughout the Word of God. There are the seven pieces of furniture in the Tabernacle of Moses, alluding to the seven experiences in our spiritual life. Moreover, there are the seven feasts of the Lord, which translate into the seven dispensations of the Church Age. In the New Testament, there were the seven parables of the kingdom of God as expounded by our Lord Himself in Matthew chapter 13. In addition to these and many others, the Scriptures close with multiple sevens in the book of Revelation, including the awesome triple judgments of the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials.

The Word of God was written with extraordinary mathematical exactitude, which would only be possible if there was one Author, our Blessed Holy Spirit. Working over a long period of time, the

Holy Spirit moved upon well over 40 writers to record the Holy Scriptures that we call the Bible. Yet, there is a marvellous unity. Let us reverence these pages that we have been given to read and study, and so with the psalmist cry out, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law” (Ps. 119:18).

The Creation Story Must Be Received by Faith

1:1 – *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”* This is the Lord’s account of His creation. Let us believe by faith that the Lord did exactly what He said He did.

Atheism, Agnosticism, and Evolution

The act of creation has been hotly contested by many over the years. This denial of the biblical account of creation has increased in intensity, especially since the nineteenth century, by such erring souls as Charles Darwin, who initiated the theory of evolution.

Why do people degenerate into atheism, agnosticism, and evolution? It comes from a reprobate mind. A person is not born this way. This is the result of the heart being hardened by sin and by life. Romans 1:21-24 clearly states, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”

This is the fruit of a heart that has been hardened by immorality, pride, and disobedience. To dull the mind from guilt, they rationalise saying that there is no God; therefore there is no judgment. Then he or she becomes immensely intellectual. Homosexuality and lesbianism are not because of genes or a dominant mother. The Word of God says it is because of a wilful rejection of God, and darkness that enters the soul which leads to a reprobate mind (Rom. 1:18-32). Homosexuality is against nature. Even the animal kingdom knows better.

Another bitter opponent of God’s account of creation was the prolific author, H. G. Wells. His first works, for which he is most famous, were “scientific romances.” They have been recognised as pioneering masterpieces of science fiction. He explores time and space and creates alien societies in order to give body to new scientific thinking, for example, Darwin’s theory of evolution (bearing in mind that at the end of his life, Darwin rejected his own theory).

7,000 Years of Man

FIRST COMING OF CHRIST	SECOND COMING OF CHRIST	END OF CREATION
2000 years	1000 years	New Heaven New Earth New Jerusalem (Rev. 21-22)
CHURCH AGE	MILLENNIUM <i>Jesus is on earth A reign of peace Satan bound (Rev. 20)</i>	
1000 years	1000 years	(8th day) New beginning (Rev. 21:5)
5 days <i>of rest and activity</i>	<i>We are approaching the end of the 6th day</i>	(7th day) Earth enters into rest
6000 years 6000 years allotted to man the seventh day brought rest great and sorrow reign on earth (Rev. 19:7-8). They will be united in marriage will be in <i>the fulness of the time</i> (Gal. 4:4) and a new earth (Rev. 21:1-22:21)		

Then at the turn of the century we have the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels with their manifesto of the Communist party, advocating likewise the evolution and atheism of that diabolical society and political system.

There are numerous reputable works that have enunciated for us the fact that evolution is impossible, even from a scientific point of view, because for evolution to be a valid truth, it must have an ongoing state. There is no such evidence to prove the theory of evolution, since life itself proves that there is no such transmutation of the species, meaning that the species of man and beasts are not undergoing any such transformation. Therefore, before our very eyes we have the repudiation of that hypothesis.

Evolution is in actuality a philosophy and a belief that has no scientific basis, but is the refuge of those who do not wish to contemplate a final accountability before the Divine Judge. T. H. Huxley (1825-1895) was a well-known biologist and proponent of Darwinism. His grandson, Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), stated in his *Ends and Means*, that the philosophy of evolution was essentially an instrument of liberation (sexual and political). His grandfather chose and endorsed this philosophy because it eased his conscience and permitted him to live a life of sin.

Evolution is the dogma of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), introduced by the first Director General, Sir Julian Huxley. In fact, Wedell Bird, author of *Origin of Species Revisited*, remarks, “most of higher education is irrationally committed in its affirmation of evolution.”

Dr. A. E. Wilder Smith, Dr. W. R. Thompson, and even the Russian scientist Dr. Dimitri Kouznetsov have said that the theory of evolution, to a certain extent, has impeded the progress of science. Therefore, far from being scientifically proven, it is a philosophy that has been detrimental to true scientific research in a number of disciplines.

However, the Word of God states, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear” (Heb. 11:3). Remember, it is by faith that we understand. The wisdom of this world has lured many men of letters into becoming fools, as Paul says in Romans 1:22, “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”

The World Was Not Created by an Explosion

You have probably heard of the “big bang theory.” It takes more faith to believe this than to believe the biblical account of creation. According to the big bang theory, suddenly there was a huge

explosion and the earth came into being. This theory has as much logic as for a man carrying a puzzle box of 10,000 pieces, to suddenly stumble, and after all the pieces have flown into the air, to come to the ground in perfect order.

An explosion does not create order and design. It sends everything in every direction, bringing chaos and destruction. And yet, the universe is made with extraordinary exactitude and perfect design that required the genius of a supreme being. Can you imagine an automobile being created as a result of an explosion? Of course not! Every part of an engine is carefully thought through and designed by an intelligent mind. Even to an unbelieving mind, the theory of a “big explosion” starting this world is ludicrous.

Our earth is so positioned that it is in perfect proximity to the sun. The northern part of the earth tilts closer to the sun to give us summer, and then tilts away from the sun to give us winter. The earth turns on its axis to give us day and night. Oh, how excellent is our Lord! He does everything in magnificent wisdom (Ps. 104:24). No one in their right mind could attribute this well ordered creation to happenstance.

Paul warns his beloved son in the faith, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called” (1 Tim. 6:20). Now we must turn our attention to a very important fact of creation as we consider the next verse.

The Gap Theory

The “gap theory” (as it is called) states that there is a large gap of time between Genesis 1:1, “*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*” and Genesis 1:2, “*And the earth became without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” In the very beginning, the Lord created the heavens and the earth. Then, over a long period of time, the earth *became* (as it reads in the Hebrew) without form and void, and darkness covered the earth. The former civilisation and creation of God corrupted itself and was destroyed by God. Then, at a certain point in time, around 6,000 years ago, the Lord reformed this earth and brought into existence the creation that we know today.

One reason for this theory is simply that the Lord makes everything beautiful and perfect (Eccl. 3:11). It is inconsistent with the Lord’s character and nature to create something that is without form and empty. Why, therefore, was the earth without form and void? The reason is that there had been a previous civilisation here on earth, which had rebelled with Satan against the Majesty on high. The

earth had been corrupted. Now we find God bringing into existence a restoration of the earth from Genesis 1:2b to 2:3.

There are other proofs to substantiate that there was a former creation. The Lord commanded man in Genesis 1:28 to *replenish* the earth. You can only *replenish* something that has been inhabited before. The Hebrew word for “replenish” is the same word the Lord used after the destruction of all the inhabitants of the world in the Flood. The Lord told Noah and his sons to *replenish* the earth that had been previously inhabited (Gen. 9:1).

Another thing that is very interesting is the difference between fallen angels and demons. Angels, we know, have wings and they can fly. Demons, on the other hand, are earthbound. In addition to this, they always seek to inhabit and possess a body, but angels do not. The reason for this is that demons are the disembodied spirits of the former civilisation. (Please refer to our book entitled *Angels* for further study.)

<i>The Gap Theory</i>		
Genesis 1:1-2		
1 ORIGINAL CREATION Genesis 1:1	2 JUDGMENT AND DESOLATION Genesis 1:2a	3 RESTORATION OF EARTH Genesis 1:2b - 2:3
<i>“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”</i>	<i>“And the earth [became] without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”</i>	<i>“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.”</i>

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION (1:2b - 2:3)

1:2a – *“And the earth became without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.”* The earth is many thousands, perhaps millions of years old. Genesis 1:1 goes all the way back to the very beginning. In this verse, we find out when the earth became a dead planet through judgment.

Psalm 104:29 states, “Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.” This verse may refer to the judgment of old, as well as Job 9:5-7 says, “Which removeth the mountains, and they know not: which overturneth them in his anger. Which

shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. Which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars.” Moreover, Psalm 104:30 may refer to the re-creation, “Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth.”

1:2b – *“And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”* This verse and onwards is a restoration of something that was already here. How much time elapsed between 1:1 and 1:2b is unknown, but it was probably an inconceivable span of time. All pre-Adamic life died. Earth became a dark, desolate planet. Fossils are believed to be the remains of former animal and plant life. Demons are the disembodied spirits of the former civilisation. They were not men, though they may have been similar. Adam was the first man. He was created on the sixth day, about 6,000 years ago. The story of creation should be received with complete faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6).

The First Day of Creation

1:3 – *“And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.”* On the first day, God created light. Actually it was a restoration of light. Light reveals one of the intrinsic qualities of the Lord. God is Light! Christ said in John 8:12, “I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” This is confirmed in 1 John 1:5, “...God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Truly, Christ is the Light of the world that gives light to everyone who comes into the world (Jn. 1:9).

In calling for light, the Lord was declaring for His very own nature to penetrate the blackness of the earth, which had been encompassed with the darkness that had come upon it because of the rebellion of its former inhabitants. God said, “Let there be light,” and at once there was light. He willed it, and it came to pass. The spoken Word of God is creative (Ps. 33:6,9). The bringing into existence of light was the first act of creation.

The blessed Holy Spirit works upon the will and affections by enlightening our understanding. Darkness would have always enveloped man if the Son of God had not come and given us understanding (1 Jn. 5:20). Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts...” At new birth, God brings light into the inward recesses of our souls, which have been darkened by sin, and we become a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Light is the first act of restoration of our soul.

1:4-5 – *“And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning*

were the first day.” God saw that the light was good. He divided the light from the darkness, and made a distinction and a difference between the two.

What association and companionship can light have with darkness? Obviously, none! In heaven there is perfect light, and there is no darkness whatsoever. In hell there is utter darkness, and not even a gleam of light. This has a spiritual application for our lives. The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:14, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”

We should be separate from the Prince of darkness, the works of darkness, and those who walk in darkness. It must be observed that the Lord is a God that separates the good from the evil, light from darkness, and the pure from the defiled. We, ourselves, must be separate from darkness and iniquity (2 Cor. 6:17).

God has called us “out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:5, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.” We are called the children of light and the children of the day. The unredeemed are called the children of darkness, the children of disobedience, and the children of wrath.

We should walk in the light, which means living in obedience to God’s commandments (1 Jn. 1:7). Paul’s admonition in Ephesians 5:8 was, “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.” The day and the night belong to the Lord. Let us use our time wisely, by working for Him every day, and resting in Him every night, meditating in His law both day and night (Ps. 1:2).

The Second Day of Creation

1:6-8 – *“And God said, Let there be a firmament [or expanse] in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.”* On the second day of creation, God separated the earth from the waters above. God adjusted the earth’s atmosphere and gravity so that water stayed on the earth, and water vapour stayed above the earth.

Again, we have a separation in the act of creation. This time that which is heavenly (or spiritual) was separated from that which is earthly (or carnal). Let us remember the exhortation of the Apostle

Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:50, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”

The Third Day of Creation

1:9-13 – *“And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the third day.”*

On the third day of creation, the Lord separated the sea from the dry land. Then He commanded the land to bring forth every kind of vegetation (grass, herbs, trees, etc.). Here likewise we see the sovereignty of God in creation and in all His wondrous works. The Lord says in Isaiah 51:15, “But I am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared.” He determined the boundaries of the seas and the shorelines (Job 38:11).

The earth that had been barren and full of emptiness, by a spoken word from the Lord, became fruitful and full of God’s riches. Although man is allowed to use the earth and its produce, it is from God, and is to be used for His glory, honour, and service (cf. Ps. 24:1, 115:16). At His command, the earth brings forth grass, herbs, and fruits. If we have put our trust in Him who is the Fountain, even when the streams of temporal blessings are dried up (Jer. 17:7-8), we may rejoice in Him, for He will sustain us.

Producing Like Kind

There is another truth here that is very important. God decreed that everything in His kingdom reproduces after its kind. A potato brings forth potatoes and an apple reproduces apples. There is no transmutation of species, or the ability to cross over from one species to another, in the natural or the spiritual realms.

We reproduce children in our image in the natural. A young boy is often told that he is just like his father. We also reproduce spiritually in others what is in us. If we are kings and priests in the Lord, we will reproduce kings and priests. The members of a congregation, generally speaking, do everything the pastor does. If we resent correction and authority, this will be reproduced in our

offspring. However, if we are obedient, this will produce a spirit of compliance in our children. That is why we must pray for the Lord to change us so that we do not pass on bad traits to our spiritual children. They will bear remarkable resemblance to us in spirit, makeup, disposition, propensity, and inclination.

The Fourth Day of Creation

1:14-19 – *“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.”*

In the fourth day’s work, the Lord made the sun, moon, and stars. In the Hebrew language, the word “made” in verse 15 does not imply a creative act. These verses are declarative of function only. God did not create the sun, moon and stars at this time; He simply commanded them to become visible and resume their functions. They were for signs, seasons, days, and years. All of these heavenly bodies are the works of God. We are not told the number, nature, place, size, or motions of the stars. This was not accidental, but deliberate. The Scriptures were not written to gratify curiosity or to make us astronomers, but to lead us to God, and to form us into His image and likeness.

The lights of heaven are made to serve the Creator. They do it faithfully, and shine in their season without fail. Christ said in John 9:5, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” Jesus Christ is indeed the Light of the world. However, He has since ascended to His Father’s right hand. Now He wants to shine His light through us. Christ also said in Matthew 5:14-16: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

We are set as lights in this world to serve the Lord and to reveal Him to others. We were created to be His lights in this world, but so often we do not fulfil our mission in life. Many believers burn their Master’s candles, but they do not mind their Master’s work. Let us not hide our faith, but let it be seen openly before all men.

The sun, moon and stars are not only celestial bodies, but they are also types of the Lord Himself, and of His people. Christ is the Sun of Righteousness (Mal. 4:2). The moon can typify the Church because she is a reflection of Him (Rev. 12:1). The stars speak to us of faithful saints who “turn many to righteousness” as it says in Daniel 12:3. May we always stay fixed in our courses as the stars of heaven, and fulfil God’s will and course for our lives.

The Fifth Day of Creation

1:20-23 – *“And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.”*

On this day of creation the Lord created all the fish of the sea and water animals, and all the fowls of the air. None of the animals created on this day are earthbound. One of the constant themes that we see throughout the Word of God is that God is the God of *abundance*. He caused everything to bring forth in abundance in His creation. Christ said in John 10:10, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” In the new creation of a believer, the Lord seeks to impart His resurrection life in an overflowing abundance.

The Sixth Day of Creation

1:24-25 – *“And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”*

On this day the Lord created all of the land creatures, cattle, beasts, creeping things, and man. Insects, which are more numerous than the birds and beasts, seem to have been part of this day’s work. The Creator’s wisdom and power can be admired as much in an ant as in an elephant. The power of God’s providence preserves all things, and fruitfulness is the effect of His blessing.

We should note that the Lord has placed truth in all of His creation, even as Paul states in Romans 1:20, “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,

being understood *by the things that are made*, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” All of the Lord’s creation reveals His wisdom.

1:26 – *“And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air; and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”*

After completing His creation of the vegetable, mineral, and animal kingdoms, the Lord then created man. Man is the finest and highest of the Lord’s creations. Unlike the rest of God’s creation, man was made in the likeness and image of God. God Himself later became a man to redeem man. Christ will remain a man for all eternity. There are four aspects relative to man in this verse that we should now examine.

Man - God’s Highest Creation

1. The Lord created the rest of His creation by His spoken word, but He made and formed man with His own hands. He breathed the breath of life into man.

2. *“Let us make man in our image.”* Man was made in the image of God in physical appearance. All those who have been privileged to see the Lord will attest to this.

3. *“Let us make man after our likeness.”* Man was made also in the likeness of God. (In the Hebrew text these two words are sometimes used interchangeably.) This refers to the soul and character of God. This includes the Godlike attributes of love, joy, and peace, epitomised in the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), as well as the power of thought, reason, and associated emotions.

4. *“And let them have dominion over all the earth.”* Being made like his Creator, man is given dominion, power, and authority over all of the other creatures. For this purpose, the Lord has put the fear of man within animals so that they will submit to man.

1:27 – *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”* For the natural purposes of the procreation of the human race, the Lord made both man and woman. They were also to be a mutual strength to each other, thus enabling them to fulfil their appointed tasks in this life, both in the natural and spiritual realms.

1:28 – *“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air;*

and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” Here we are introduced to a significant truth that is in reality a spiritual law of the kingdom of God. Blessing brings multiplication. This is repeated again in the Lord’s promise to Abraham when He said to him, “In blessing I will bless thee and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed...” (Gen. 22:17).

This truth was made alive to us when we were in the fruit-growing areas of the United States. At this time the Golden Delicious apple was being developed there. When they had produced the species that satisfied them, then the sales became worldwide. In the same way, when God meets us afresh with a new blessing, He then multiplies that blessing among the nations. The key to multiplication is the blessing of the Lord! For Adam and Eve it meant that they should repopulate the earth.

1:29 – *“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”* The Lord has provided abundantly for His people. He provided all the vegetables and herbs for man to eat. Man was not given meat to eat until after the Flood (Gen. 9:3).

As the Lord Jesus stated, God causes His sun to shine upon the just and the unjust alike (Mt. 5:45). We are prone to ask why some countries prosper materially while others seemingly are less well-endowed. All it takes is a careful observation to realise that the nations who serve God are blessed agriculturally while those who do not serve the Lord are in poverty. Also, this is true when it comes to individuals in countries. There is one other factor that should be borne in mind, the words of Proverbs 13:23, “Much food is in the tillage of the poor: but there is that is destroyed for [lack] of judgment.” The earth is said to be capable of producing enough food for 50 billion people, but because of oppression, mismanagement, and injustice, half of the world’s population is undernourished.

1:30 – *“And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.”* God provided the plants to sustain all the animals. The righteous Lord cares for His creation.

Proverbs 12:10 says, “A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast.” This thought of God’s tender care for all His creatures is seen also in His admonition to Jonah: “And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; *and also much cattle?*” (Jon. 4:11).

1:31 – *“And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.”* The hallmark of a master builder is that after finishing

his work, he stands back and surveys it with satisfaction, knowing that it will enhance his status as a reputable contractor. In like manner, the Lord declared all of His works to be good.

The Lord also spoke to us when we were building the campus for Zion Ministerial Institute in Waverly, New York—everything was to have a standard of excellence. My prayer is that when we all stand before God to give an account of our life, the Lord will say to us, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” May all of our works be good and acceptable in His sight.

Five Common Expressions in Chapter One

1. **“And God said”** — v3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29. The Bible never tries to prove it is God’s Word, it simply assumes it. There are no apologetics employed. Other expressions such as, “Thus saith the Lord”, or “The word of the Lord came” are found well over 3,800 times. You do not need to prove there is a God, or prove that the Bible is God’s Word. Even the devils know it, and tremble (Jas. 2:19). The Word of God is a sharp Sword, use it, do not defend it.

2. **“And it was so”** — v7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30. Every time God speaks, something happens. God wants to speak creatively *through us*. God’s Spirit in Joshua commanded, “Sun, stand still!” And it did (Josh. 10:12-13). All the solar system stopped for a whole day. Psalm 33:9 says, “For He spake, and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast.” Whenever God speaks, something is set in motion. When God spoke, something happened immediately. Animals did not evolve, nor did man, nor did plant life. When God spoke they came into being immediately, in one day.

3. **“And God saw that it was good”** — v4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31. Every thing God does is good! God is incapable of evil of any kind. He is totally good. “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” He is abundant in goodness and truth (Ex. 34:6, Ps. 34:8). How do we interpret Isaiah 45:7 which says, “I create evil”? Here the word evil means *adversity or difficulty*. It is the same word used in Job 42:11. It simply means that, sometimes, God allows his people to be tested with hardships.

4. **“And the evening and the morning were ...”** — v5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31. This indicates that the seven days in chapter one were *24-hour* days. Genesis chapter one is not an allegory (Ex. 20:11). God did not try to fool us when He gave us His Word. Always take the literal interpretation, unless God indicates otherwise.

5. **“After his kind”** — v11, 12, 21, 24, 25. Everything reproduces its own kind. Cows reproduce cows, potatoes reproduce potatoes, oak trees reproduce oak trees, and man reproduces man. There are

no crossovers. Plants can be improved, but left to themselves they will degenerate. A horse and a donkey can produce a mule but a mule cannot reproduce another mule. Species can be improved, plant or animal, but left to themselves they will degenerate. Oak trees are the same today as they were when God created them in chapter one. This is true concerning birds, animals, plants, and man.

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION

Day One	—	Restoration of light; division of light from darkness.
Day Two	—	The dividing of the waters. Earth’s atmosphere and gravity adjusted.
Day Three	—	The sea separated from the land. Every kind of vegetation brought forth.
Day Four	—	Restoration of heavenly bodies—the sun, moon, and stars.
Day Five	—	Creation of all sea animals and fowl of the air.
Day Six	—	Creation of all land creatures; creation of man.
Day Seven	—	God rested from all of His works.

The Seventh Day of Creation

The First Sabbath

2:1-3 – *“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.”* On the seventh day of creation, the Lord rested from all of His works. The Lord made this seventh day a very special day. Later on in Israel’s history, this day became known as the sabbath, which means “cessation” (Ex. 16:23). This day was set aside as a holy day unto the Lord. At Mount Sinai, it became a part of the Law.

The seventh day in which God rested is not just a historical and theological fact, but it is linked to a spiritual experience in the life of the believer (Heb. 4:1-11). This is expounded by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 4:10-11, “For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.”

There is a spiritual rest (a spiritual sabbath) that the Lord desires every Christian to enter into. By grace, God’s people can cease from their own strivings to fulfil God’s will, and enter into a state of rest whereby the Holy Spirit accomplishes His will in and through our lives. Isaiah 11:10 says, “His rest shall be glorious.” In this spiritual state of rest, we cease from our own opinions, ideas, and ways. Even our tongue must enter into rest (Isa. 58:13).

Particulars about the Creation

2:4-5 – “*These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.*” The Creator is here given the name Jehovah. Where the word “LORD” is printed in capital letters in our English Bibles, in the original it is *Jehovah*. Jehovah denotes the fact that God alone has His being of Himself, and that He gives being to all creatures and things.

Further notice is taken of plants and herbs, because they were made and appointed to be food for man. The earth did not bring forth its fruits by itself. This was done by the power of the Almighty. Rain is also a gift of God. It did not rain until the Lord caused it to rain. In the same way, grace does not grow of itself in the heart of a believer; it is the work of God.

Man was made of the dust (Gen. 2:7), which covers the surface of the earth. The soul, on the other hand, was not made of the earth, as the body was. How sad it is, then, for the soul to cleave to the earth and mind earthly things (Col. 3:1-2). Very soon we will all have to give an account to God for what we have done with our lives and with our souls. Of what benefit is it if we gain the whole world and lose our souls (Mt. 16:26)? Fools despise their own souls by caring for their bodies before their souls.

Superiority of the Pre-Flood Era

2:6 – “*But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*” From evidence of the remains of antediluvian (or pre-flood) vegetation and animal life, it appears that the earth originally created in Genesis 1:2b was drastically different from the earth we know today. Given evidence of redwood trees in Polar Regions and beautiful fruit trees in Arctic Circle areas, we must conclude that the earth tilted upon its axis during the period of the Flood. Prior to this time, it is evident that the earth was a very pleasant place of universal temperate climate. Animals and plants grew to greater dimensions than those of the same species today. Man’s and animals’ longevity was conservatively *ten times* that of our times.

It may well be that the size of man was greater too, given such ideal conditions. It is noteworthy that man’s physical dimensions are generally increasing worldwide, especially in the Western world due to better living conditions and eating habits. The sailors of the Mayflower were, generally speaking, only five feet four inches tall. That is a considerable difference from the basketball giants of today who are often seven feet in height.

When studying the fossils and other remains of the pre-flood era, which have been discovered in the South Polar regions, Antarctica, and elsewhere, it is clear that the world enjoyed a very mild and temperate climate from pole to pole. Vegetation, the animal and mineral kingdoms, and certainly mankind, enjoyed a much longer life span in such conducive conditions. When the Lord said that His creation was good, it was very good indeed; and the surroundings were ideal. Truly, as King Solomon stated, the Lord makes everything beautiful in His time (Eccl. 3:11).

2:7 – *“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”* Man was not created in the same manner as the animals were. The animals were created through a spoken word from God, whereas God personally formed man Himself. In fact, man has the life of God’s Spirit pulsating through his very being. God is the light that lights every man that enters into the world. This difference between man and beast is re-emphasised by King Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:21, where he stated that the spirit of man goes upward, and the spirit of the beast goes downward to the earth.

The Planting of the Garden of Eden (2:8-14)

2:8 – *“And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.”* It is so revealing of the character and nature of our Heavenly Father that He loves the beauty of life as epitomised by a garden filled with trees that are pleasant to the eyes. (The name *Eden* means “delight” or “pleasure.”) We have a saying in England that one is closest to God in a garden. Judging from the account of the creation story that is probably not very far from being accurate.

2:9 – *“And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”* This idyllic lifestyle, however, had a purpose that we need to understand in order that we might more fully appreciate our loving Heavenly Father. God is holy, but He did not create man holy. Adam was created in a state of innocence. God’s ultimate desire was, and still is, for man to become holy.

Difference Between Holiness and Innocence

The difference between holiness and innocence could best be illustrated, perhaps, with this story of a little boy and a cookie jar. Entering into the kitchen, the little boy perceives that his mother has just baked some scrumptious cookies and placed them in a jar. He therefore with boldness and without scruples puts his hand into the jar and takes one of them. Munching it, he sees his mother and tells her that they taste very good. However, his mother replies those cookies are for tea and that he must not eat any more until then.

Unfortunately, the temptation proves too much, and when his mother is not around, he puts his hand in and takes another one. Thus his state of innocence is lost. Had he passed the cookie jar without taking another one, he would have been holy. Holiness is that state of knowing the commandment and not yielding to temptation. It is to be separate from sin. Holiness is to know to choose the good and refuse the evil (Isa. 7:15).

Thus the Lord had provided lavishly for the needs of all His creation. This is a truth that needs to be firmly rooted in our hearts, even as the Lord Himself taught us to trust our Heaven Father implicitly. “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?” (Mt. 6:25). All that was needed for the garden and His creation was furnished, including a river.

2:10 – *“And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.”* Since the Garden of Eden spiritually represents *the garden of our heart*, it is important that we also, like the original garden, have the river of God flowing out of us. It should flow from the well of bubbling water springing up from within our hearts (Jn. 4:14), and like a river out of our innermost being should flow to all those around us (Jn. 7:37-39).

2:11 – *“The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;”* Pison means “the freely flowing river.” Everything before the Fall was without impediment. This river is now nonexistent, but remembering that the earth in those days was probably one landmass, it could well have been the Nile. This opinion is favoured by a number of scholars.

The Land of Havilah is in all probability the modern day kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Thus, the Nile of those days could have had its head in the Fertile Crescent and encircled the land of Arabia. Remember, too, that in antediluvian times, there were no desert areas but every place was well watered from the mist that went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the earth (Gen. 2:6).

2:12 – *“And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.”* This verse could perhaps be best understood by translating it “the white pearl and precious green stone” which was prevalent in Arabia.

2:13 – *“And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.”* Gihon, meaning “to break forth,” could equally have been the Nile since the Nile of our day flows through part of Ethiopia and the Sudan.

2:14 – “*And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.*” Hiddekel is the Hebrew name for the third river flowing from the Garden of Eden. Most modern translations translate it as the Tigris.

The important areas of subsequent world history owed their fertility to God’s original garden of creation. Hiddekel also retains the transliteration for Tigris in Daniel 10:4. The fact that Hiddekel is still mentioned in Holy Scriptures until the time of Daniel seems sufficient proof that these two rivers (Hiddekel and Euphrates) that water the Fertile Crescent, point to the original location of the Garden of Eden.

The Placing of Man in the Garden

2:15 – “*And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*” Thus the original work that God gave to man was that of a gardener. The Lord Himself is called a Husbandman (Jas. 5:7, Jn. 15:1), showing conclusively that God loves gardens. The root meaning of paradise is *a garden* (Rev. 2:7). Our hearts are also likened to gardens, which must be tended to daily, lest evil roots spring up quickly (Heb. 12:15).

God’s Command Man Is Made to Be Tested

2:16-17 – “*And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Not only was liberty given to man in taking the fruits of paradise, but also everlasting life, which was made sure to him upon his obedience. However, there was a trial appointed to test his obedience.

By transgression he would forfeit his Maker’s favour, and deserve His displeasure with all its awful effects, so that he would become liable to pain, disease, and death. Worse than that, he would lose the holy image of God, and all the comfort of His favour. He would feel the torment of sinful passions, and the terror of his Maker’s eternal vengeance, unless the Lord Himself provided a supreme sacrifice.

One of the first things we learn about man *from the beginning* is that he was created to be tested and proved. God looks for individuals who choose to love Him out of their own free will. God has never commanded love by constraint. Instead, He has showered us with innumerable blessings to show His love for us, and He looks for a response from man.

Tests are for the purpose of examining us to see what is in our hearts. Tests also show if God has first place in our affections. Abraham was tested to see if Isaac and the promises were more important than God Himself (Gen. 22). God is testing us all the time (Job 7:17-18). Paul warned the elders at Ephesus that the Church was going to be tested (Acts 20:28-31). God even allows heresies in His Church to see who is genuine and who is not (1 Cor. 11:19, Deut. 13:1-3).

The Two Trees

God commanded Adam and Eve not to touch the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16-17). This tree may also be called *the tree of conscience*. The other notable tree in the Garden was *the tree of life* (Gen. 2:9, 3:22-24). If a man partook of the fruit of the tree of life, he would live forever (Rev. 2:7). These two trees were literal trees in a literal garden, in the Middle East.

Adam and Eve were forbidden to eat of the tree of conscience. In fact, they were commanded to not even *touch* it. *Touch* always leads to trouble. The Serpent, who is also referred to as the Tempter, persuaded Eve that she would be like God if only she would taste of the tree of conscience (Gen. 3:2-3).

The Making of Woman

2:18 – *“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”* Thus we see that man is incomplete without woman, and her primary role, with the exception of childbearing, is to strengthen her husband and assist him in fulfilling his God-appointed task upon earth.

The Naming of the Animals

2:19-20 – *“And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.”*

Concerning those who would have us believe that man evolved from monkeys, we should note that the first man was exceedingly intelligent. He was able to name over 500,000 species of creatures according to their characteristics. Which man today possesses a vocabulary approaching that magnitude?

A helpmate among the animal kingdom was not found for man since only the spirit of man would know the things of a man (1 Cor. 2:11). Therefore, only one who is made like unto man can have the ability to understand his needs and be able to offer strength and comfort to a man. Thus, God created woman.

The Deep Sleep

2:21 – *“And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof.”* In Holy Scripture, we find three instances of a deep sleep. In all three, great solemnity is signified. There was the case of Abraham when God made a sovereign covenant with him and his seed to give them the land of Canaan (Gen. 15:12-17). Another situation was when God caused Saul to fall into a deep sleep to test the integrity of David’s heart (1 Sam. 26).

I have had similar experiences when God desired to do extraordinary things in and through my own life, and I understood that it was uniquely God rather than my own doing.

The Divine Institution of Marriage

2:22 – *“And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”* Therefore even as in birth man comes from woman, so in the beginning woman came from man (1 Cor. 11:8-12). Oh, who can fathom the wisdom and knowledge of God for His ways are past finding out (Rom. 11:33)!

“And brought her unto the man.” I believe this is the divine way in marriage. God causes the woman of His choice to come to us, and we men do not have to go out in search of a bride. This is illustrated when God led Eliezer, Abraham’s servant, in the selection of a bride for Isaac.

This was my own happy experience. My beloved wife was brought to me in Europe all the way from the west coast of the United States, a distance of 7000 miles. And what a blessed marriage we had because it was God who brought us together. God reserves the right to select our mate for us. We must be willing to *choose His choice* and not be disobedient or self-willed.

Bone of Our Bone

2:23-24 – *“And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his*

mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Thus, man and woman who are joined together in holy matrimony are in the words of our Lord Himself, “one flesh.” Matthew 19:4-6 says, “...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

This truth is also applied by the Apostle Paul to the mystical union between Christ and His Church in Ephesians 5:30-32, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” Marriage is therefore a type of our relationship with Christ. Through marriage we begin to learn more perfectly how to relate to Christ our Heavenly Bridegroom.

2:25 – “*And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*” Where there is no sin, there is no shame. Although Adam was created in God’s image and likeness, something was missing. Morally, they were like infants who did not know good or evil. They had not yet partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God wanted to keep them in the state of innocence until all the testing was accomplished.

PART TWO

The Fall of Man

3:1-14

The Serpent Beguiles Eve

3:1 – *“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”* Satan and all his angels have the ability to transform themselves into the form of animals or mankind, or even as angels of light (2 Cor. 11:14-15). In this case, Satan chose to appear unto man in the likeness of a serpent. It is interesting to note that in the beginning the serpent had the ability of speech. He is clearly *the instigator* of the temptation. This is the counterpart of Christ’s temptation in the wilderness for 40 days (Mt. 4:1-11).

Both the first and the Last Adam were permitted to be tested by Satan. The first Adam failed but the Last Adam did not succumb. Blessed be the name of the Lord! This insidious creature with all his cunning sought to create doubt in Eve’s heart concerning the validity of the commandment of God. Therefore, by mixing truth with error, as the wicked will so often do, the serpent gained his objective, causing Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit.

The Attraction Is Explained

3:2 – *“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden.”* To carry on a dialogue with the Tempter of our soul is very unwise and dangerous. The end result is very costly. When Christ was tempted, He responded to Satan with scriptural rebukes and so should we in like circumstances. Furthermore, Eve should not have been away from her covering, Adam.

3:3 – *“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”* Eve declared exactly what the Lord had said. However, the Tempter did not give up. He came from every angle.

3:4 – *“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.”* This was a direct lie, which the serpent, the father of lies, did not hesitate to employ. In effect, Satan said that there

would be no judgment. After casting doubt upon God's Word, he attacked the subject of coming judgment, by suggesting there were no consequences for disobedience.

3:5 – *“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”* This was a true statement, but it was also a half-truth by which the adversary intended to ensnare them. This is similar to the tactics Satan employed in the temptation of the Last Adam, Christ. The Tempter tried to make Adam and Eve look for a *short cut* into that which God had planned for their lives. Adam was certainly to have been raised to such a status of being a god since he was truly a son of God and made in His image (Lk. 3:38).

Similarly, Christ was offered all the kingdoms of this world if He would but worship Satan. Christ was already the heir of all the kingdoms of this world, but Satan was offering it to Him outside of the will of God. We also have the classic example of Abraham, who sought to accomplish the will of God through Ishmael instead of waiting for his Isaac.

3:6 – *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

Thus, she regarded and dwelt upon the qualities of the tree. The tree was:

1. *Good for food.* Many, alas, have thought of their belly before the will of God. Paul wrote, “Whose God is their belly...who mind earthly things” as he lamented over the spiritual state of many in Philippi (Phil. 3:18-19).

2. *Pleasant to the eyes.* Many sins begin with the eyes. For example, Lot made crucial decisions according to what he saw in the natural with his eyes without consulting God (Gen. 13:10-11). Sodom *looked* like a beautiful place to live, but it was ripe for judgment.

Christ did not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor did He reprove according to what He heard (Isa. 11:3). He possessed the understanding and perspective of His Heavenly Father because He relied upon Him.

3. *Furthermore it was desirable to make one wise.* Of the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge outside of the will of God we must be careful, since many have erred thereby. Scripture warns, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor. 1:19). We must seek God's wisdom, not the wisdom of man.

Colossians 2:8 admonishes, “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.” Sadly, many Christians lose their faith when they go to secular colleges.

Eve Was Deceived - Adam Was Not

The thought of Adam’s eating the forbidden fruit must be analysed very carefully. The Apostle Paul told us that Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression (1 Tim. 2:14). Clearly, the serpent and Eve had their dialogue in the absence of Adam. After the serpent had beguiled Eve, Adam came on the scene and realised what she had done. Therefore, he partook of the forbidden fruit with her for several reasons.

Firstly, it seems evident from Genesis 3:17 that Eve had been like Delilah (Jdg. 16:15-16) and had *persisted* in her appeal for Adam to take the fruit. Secondly, having seen Adam in a vision, I know by revelation that he was governed by his soulish emotions. Realising that Eve would die and that he would lose her and be separated from her forever; he identified himself with Eve and became sin for her.

There is a parallel between the two Adams. Both Adam and the Last Adam became sin for their brides. The first Adam took the path of disobedience, choosing Eve over the will of God, while the Last Adam became sin as an obedient servant to save His bride. Oh the wisdom of our Almighty God!

Seven Maladies We Inherited from Our First Parents

The following weaknesses and tendencies have been passed on to us from Adam and Eve, our first parents. *When they fell, we fell, as we were in them (Gen. 3).*

1. To doubt God’s Word, to question or challenge what God has said
2. Pride, ambition, a desire to be something God did not intend us to be
3. Curiosity to know what is forbidden
4. Making decisions by emotion, and by how things appear to be
5. Exalting human love above God’s love
6. Fear of coming to the light and exposing our hearts to God and others
7. Blaming others to ease our own guilt

3:7 – *“And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”* With their innocence lost, they now tried to cover their sin. Job stated, “If I covered my transgressions as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom” (Job 31:33). We cannot hide our sins from God.

Fig leaves speak of sweetness, yet our own sweetness and good works cannot atone for our transgressions. Many seek to do as Adam; however, increasing our good works, whatever they may be, cannot cover our sins. Isaiah 64:6 states that all our righteousness is like filthy rags (Rom. 10:3, Phil. 3:9).

3:8 – *“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”* This is the case with all of us, to desire to flee from His presence when sin comes between the Lord and us.

God Calls upon Adam and Eve to Answer

3:9 – *“And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”* It is ever the nature of the Good Shepherd to seek us when we have strayed through sin or ignorance. Let us remember the parables of the prodigal son and the lost sheep. The Lord takes the initiative to seek man. We love Him because he *first* loved us (1 Jn. 4:19, Rom. 3:11-12).

3:10 – *“And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”* God’s presence that once had been such a joy to our first father now becomes one of dread. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1-2) and others. The fallen nature creates suspicions, distrust, and imaginations.

3:11 – *“And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?”* Here we see the graciousness of the Lord. He gave Adam an opportunity to repent, and made it easy for him to confess by asking the appropriate questions. Instead, Adam sought to justify himself.

3:12-13 – *“And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.”* In so justifying himself, Adam was in reality reproaching God, blaming God’s gift as the cause for his fall. Eve followed suit.

Judgment on the Serpent

3:14 – *“And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.”* In Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, Satan is also called *the serpent*. The serpent, from a state of pre-eminence that he enjoyed at creation, is now reduced to the lowly and despised creature that we know today. This is the first mention of Satan’s judgment.

PART THREE

The Plan of Redemption

3:15-24

The Promised Seed

3:15 – *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise [or crush] thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”* We have a picture of a man violently trampling upon the head of a snake. The seed of the woman is referring to Christ. The Lord revealed His plan that was conceived before the foundation of the world—the promise of a Redeemer who would crush the head of the serpent, although He injured His heel in the process. A crushed head is *fatal*, but a bruised heel is *temporary*. On the cross Christ crushed the head of Satan and stripped him of all his power. Christ’s injury was temporary. He rose from the dead three days later.

There is another truth to consider here also. There is enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The seed of the woman is Christ but it is also His followers. The seed of the serpent are the demons, the fallen angels, and all who follow Satan. There is a perpetual strife between the godly seed and the serpent’s seed. Ultimately the righteous will also gain a personal victory over the devil and crush the head of the serpent, through Christ.

The Punishment of Mankind

3:16 – *“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”* Certainly a woman’s life is a vale of tears. Her disposition is one of extreme sensitivity and she is easily wounded by a chance remark. Her life consists of a desire to please firstly her father and then her husband. Yet her discernment is such that she is easily deceived by the unscrupulous.

My wife has admonished me on many occasions to care for the single woman whether she is young, single, a divorcee, or a widow. In restaurants, my wife would go out of her way to show kindness to waitresses of a certain age, adducing that they were obliged to work those long and arduous hours because of marital economic necessities.

There is a promise whereby the curse can be reversed for those women in Christ who live godly lives; “notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety” (1 Tim. 2:15). The sentence of sorrow and of pain in motherhood put upon women can be alleviated if she continues in faith, love, holiness, and propriety (bearing in mind that the husband is always the head of the home).

3:17-18 – *“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife [she must have begged, urged, cried and insisted] and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.”* Thus the delightful conditions into which man was placed in the original Garden of Eden were now changed. Thistles and thorns now appeared to blight the handiwork of God which, in themselves, speak of the works of the flesh as delineated in Galatians 5:19-21. Added to this is the hard labour to which Adam was condemned.

3:19 – *“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Man lost much from the fall in the natural, not to mention the loss of his spiritual blessings of the actual continual presence of His beloved Lord.

The Fall - The Curse

We should pause here for a moment to make a distinction between the Fall and the Curse. The Fall was man’s disobedience. The Curse (pain, toil, sorrow, and death) involves the restraints God has placed upon fallen man to keep him on course (Gen. 3:16-19, 5:29). All of these judgments upon the human race were not because of God’s anger or revenge, but rather acts of God’s mercy (Eccl. 8:11). When fallen man is idle or has no adversity, he becomes oppressive, proud, and exceedingly wicked (Ezek. 16:49-50, Ps. 73:3-6). Strong pain often is necessary to destroy pride and evil bents in our nature (Job 33:14-19, 1 Pet. 4:1-2).

According to Romans 8:18-22, God has subjected the creation to vanity (or disappointing misery), but has also subjected it to hope. When the Curse has performed all of its work, God will remove it (Rev. 22:3). Sometimes God allows a lingering “thorn” in our lives until a certain work of grace is performed or something obstinate changes. The Apostle Paul needed a thorn to keep him on course (2 Cor. 12:6-9). A pearl is formed by terrible irritation. Sometimes a very aggravating situation is prolonged to accomplish something beautiful in our lives. When a problem or enemy has served its purpose, God will deliver us from it.

In His foreknowledge, God knew that man would fail, but He certainly did not predestine the Fall. God is not the author of disobedience, nor should sin ever be attributed to the Most High. Therefore, He ordained a Sacrifice for fallen man before the foundation of the world (1 Pet. 1:18-20, Rev.13:8).

Nehemiah 13:2b says, “God turned the curse into a blessing.” This is a divine principle. God is able to reverse a curse and turn it around for something good when man is repentant. The Curse created circumstances and a workshop for perfecting the following—longsuffering, mercy, meekness, true love, faith, loyalty, forbearance, and many other good qualities. God only uses the curse to bless us.

3:20 – *“And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living.”* The root meaning for Eve in the original Hebrew is “life giver.” Hence, her name.

3:21 – *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* God did not leave our first parents in their hopeless condition as sinners but clothed them with the skins, presumably of lambs, which therefore forfeited their lives to cover them. This prefigured the Lamb of God who would later bleed and die for the sins of the world—sins past, present, and future. Remember, there is no remission of sins without the shedding of blood (Heb. 9:22). God would not accept man’s covering for sin (fig leaves). He only accepts what He prescribes.

Adam and Eve Driven Out from Paradise

3:22-23 – *“And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”*

God bid man to leave; he would no longer occupy and enjoy the garden. This signified the shutting out of Adam and his entire guilty race from that intimate communion with God, which was the bliss and glory of paradise. The Lord sent man to a place of toil, not to a place of torment. Our first parents were shut out from the privileges of their state of innocence, yet they were not left to despair.

The way to the tree of life was closed. It was henceforth in vain for Adam and his descendants to expect righteousness, life, and happiness by the covenant of works. For the commandment of that covenant being broken, the curse of it is in full force. We are all undone, if we are judged by that covenant. God revealed this to Adam, not to drive him to despair, but to quicken him to look

for life and happiness in the promised Seed, by whom a new and living way into the holiest is laid open for us all.

Mercifully, so that man would not continue forever in his sinful condition, the Lord prevented him from eating of the tree of life. Death is also an act of mercy because at death our corruptible body of sin is destroyed, and then raised in newness of life at the time of resurrection without sin in its members. Our redemption is not complete until we receive our new bodies (Rom. 8:20-23).

PART FOUR

The Lines of Good and Evil

4:1 - 5:32

CAIN AND ABEL

This chapter is devoted to the account of the lives of two sons of Adam and Eve—Cain the eldest, and Abel his brother.

The Birth, Employment, and Religion of Cain and Abel

4:1 – *“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.”* Perhaps Eve thought that he was the promised seed. If so, she was woefully disappointed.

4:2-5 – *“And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.”* We may believe that God commanded Adam, after the Fall, to shed the blood of innocent animals, and after their death to burn part or the whole of their bodies by fire. Thus, that punishment which sinners deserve, even the death of the body and the wrath of God, of which fire is a well-known emblem, were prefigured. Observe that the original worship and means of approach to God has always been by the shedding of blood, and we are told to remember the old paths (Jer. 6:16).

Unfortunately, the offerings and especially the attitudes of Cain and Abel were very different. Cain displayed a proud, unbelieving heart in the manner in which he approached a holy God. He sacrificed and worshipped the way *he* deemed right, and came to God his own way. Therefore, he and his offering were rejected.

On the other hand, Abel came as a dependent sinner, according to God’s prescribed appointment. By his sacrifice he expressed humility, sincerity, and believing obedience. Abel’s offering and life were respected by God (1 Jn. 3:12). Thus, in seeking the benefit of the new covenant of mercy

through the promised Seed, his sacrifice had a token that God accepted. The fact that the offerings were different does not seem to be the point in question but rather the lives of the offerers.

4:6-7 – *“And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wrath? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.”* In all ages there have been two kinds of worshippers as depicted here by Cain and Abel.

First, there are proud, hardened despisers of the gospel method of salvation who attempt to please God in ways of their own devising (Rom. 9:31-33, 10:1-3). Also, there are humble believers who draw near to Him in the way He has revealed. Certainly Cain is not in this category for he demonstrated malignant anger against Abel. He harboured an evil spirit of discontent and rebellion against God.

God notices all of our sinful passions and disgruntlements. There is not an angry, envious, or fretful look that escapes His observing eye. The Lord reasoned with this rebellious man that if he came in the right way, he should be accepted.

Some understand this verse as an intimation of mercy. The same word for sin signifies a sacrifice for sin. “Though thou hast not done well, yet do not despair; the remedy is at hand.”

Christ, the great sin offering, is said to stand at the door (Rev. 3:20). Those who will not go to the door to ask for the benefit of this sin offering well deserve to perish in their sins. God’s acceptance of Abel’s offering did not change the birthright and make it his. Why then should Cain be so angry?

It is clear that the Lord was pinpointing the reason He would not accept the offering of Cain. His offering was dependent upon his conduct and attitudes. However, in the graciousness that is so typical of our Lord, He promised that upon having a repentant heart and a change of life, Cain would regain his position and privileges of the firstborn in that he would rule over his brother.

Regretfully, no act of repentance came forth, but rather Cain permitted hatred to fester in his heart, producing diabolical consequences. Even the Lord himself could not reason with Cain. When Cain continuously hardened his heart, he gave Satan an invitation to come and make a stronghold in his life. Cain and Abel both had the same background and opportunities. One chose to follow the Lord; the other went his own way. Thus, we see the subject of *choice* right from the beginning.

Cain Murders Abel - The Curse of Cain

4:8 – *“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”* This was the first murder in the Word of God, and it was between brothers in the first family. The two, therefore, set a pattern of spiritual lineage for all times. The line of Cain descended from the seed of the wicked one, Satan, which had been planted and nurtured in Cain’s heart.

The Apostle John stated, “Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous” (1 Jn. 3:12). John establishes that Cain was an evil man, and that the nature of his offering was not the real issue. The Apostle Jude terms those who followed in Cain’s spiritual line as ungodly men (Jude 1:11).

Abel - the Line of the Righteous

Abel’s name means “grassy meadow.” The Lord alluded to Abel as a prophet (Lk. 11:50-51). Moreover, we know he was a gentle shepherd (Gen. 4:2) with a tender heart. We read in Matthew 23:35, “That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.” Then in Hebrews 11:4, “By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.” Thus, Abel has become a role model of a righteous man of faith unto all generations. His life was acceptable; therefore, his sacrifice was acceptable too.

The Lord’s Judgment upon Cain

4:9 – *“And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper?”* Cain lied, not just to a man, but to Almighty God. In committing murder, he must have lost his senses because he should have realised that the Lord knows everything. Nothing is hid from Him who created us (Heb. 4:13). He also denied responsibility as the firstborn to care for his brother.

4:10 – *“And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground.”* The life is in the blood; therefore that life was crying unto God, the just Judge of all.

4:11-12 – *“And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee*

her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” Thus, sentence was pronounced upon the murderer. Triple judgment was now pronounced upon Cain:

1. The earth would not yield its fruit.
2. He would be a fugitive, meaning that he would flee for his life.
3. He would become a vagabond, since he would wander and his life would be without aim or purpose.

4:13-14 – *“And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.”*

Cain was overwhelmed with his punishment. However, we never see any acknowledgment of his crime, or any sorrow for the murder of his younger brother. Under the Law of Moses he would have had the death penalty. Therefore, his sentence was surprisingly lenient. His seed was allowed to promulgate to accomplish the purposes of God. This would have included his being a warning and an object lesson for the instruction of all future generations on matters of eternal judgment.

Something that God had *not* said, but Cain realised, was that he was now cut off from the presence of God eternally. All other forms of punishment were minor compared to the loss of the joy, peace, and happiness of heavenly bliss.

4:15 – *“And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.”* Because of Cain’s fear of being slain by anyone who found him, the Lord afforded the following protection. This mark is seen in the spirit realm. It is also a mark of protection accorded to the righteous, as seen when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in Ezekiel 9:1-7. Again this is the case with the 144,000 of Israel who are similarly protected by a mark during the great tribulation (Rev. 7:2-8).

The Conduct of Cain A Wanderer

4:16 – *“And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.”* Cain cast off all fear of God, and attended no more to God’s ordinances. Hypocritical professors who dissemble and trifle with God are justly left to themselves to do something grossly scandalous. They throw off that form of godliness to which they have been a reproach, and of

which they deny the power. Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and we never find that he came into it again.

The land Cain dwelt in was called the “land of Nod,” which means “shaking or trembling,” and shows the restlessness and uneasiness of his own spirit. It also means “wandering” or “the land of a vagabond.” They that depart from God cannot find rest anywhere else. Those on earth who looked for the heavenly city, chose to dwell in tabernacles or tents; but Cain, not minding that city above, built one on earth (Gen. 4:17). Thus, all who are cursed of God seek their settlement and satisfaction here below, and wander without eternal purpose or direction.

The Lineage of Cain

4:17-18 – *“And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. And unto Enoch was born Irad: and Irad begat Mehujael: and Mehujael begat Methusael: and Methusael begat Lamech.”*

Thus Cain went into the land called Nod to live out his life and to produce a lineage that would cause a great rebellion in the earth. Eventually, intermarriages between Cain’s line and the righteous line would bring forth God’s judgment in the form of a flood.

Cain was the first city builder. The fact that he named his city after his son Enoch was a symptom of wickedness and pride, as we see in Psalm 49:11, “Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations; they call their lands after their own names.” The unredeemed only think about this life and strive for an enduring name on earth. They do not want to consider the thought of the hereafter and standing before God’s judgment seat.

We will now go over some of Cain’s descendants. Irad, whose name means “town dweller,” implies a settled adherence to the things of the world. Mehujael, whose name means “smitten of God,” suggests that doom had enveloped Cain’s offspring. Perhaps Mehujael responded to God’s smiting and began to pray, thus naming his own son. Methusael, whose name means, “man of God or of prayer,” makes it seem possible that there were some repentant sinners in Cain’s line.

Lamech and His Wives

4:19 – *“And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.”* In the beginning, God made male and female and they became one flesh, thus indicating His intention that man should have but one wife. Here we have the introduction of

polygamy. Polygamy was never blessed of God. Thus, the origin of polygamy was in the ungodly line.

Adah means “pleasure.” Pleasure certainly sums up the goals of the wicked line. Even in the last days they shall be lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God (2 Tim. 3:4). Zillah, as some have suggested, means “tinkling.” The daughters of backslidden Zion wore tinkling ornaments in the days of Isaiah (Isa. 3:18).

The Skill of Cain’s Descendants

4:20 – *“And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle.”* In the spiritual sense, Jabal could be likened to the Reubenites who chose not to go into the Promised Land because they were occupied by their cattle (Num. 32:1-5).

4:21 – *“And his brother’s name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.”* While many musical instruments were used and even invented by King David, those of Jubal imply that they were not used for the glory of God but rather for fleshly amusement. Wrong music inspires evil worship and places people under bondage.

4:22 – *“And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.”* The inclusion of Naamah, which means “pleasant or graceful,” reflects the worldliness and sensuality of the Cainite daughters. Tubal means “producer,” and the surname Cain means “smith or forge.” He was the inventor of cold forging native copper and meteoric iron, a fact that has surfaced from artefacts recovered from pre-flood times. This hints at the beginning of idols and idolatry, and heathen worship. Romans 1:18-32 applies to Cain and his offspring.

4:23-24 – *“And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.”* This is called the swan song of Lamech, who has boastfully declared his murderous act in the killing of a young man who wounded him. There is no remorse, but rather a declaration that he will avenge ten times that which God would do to anyone who touched Cain. The thought of 77 fold vengeance may have provoked the Lord to speak of the 7 x 70 acts of forgiveness that we are expected to grant those who offend us (Mt. 18:21-22).

Cain produced an offspring of spiritual wanderers who had no eternal vision. It is also interesting to note that none of the descendants of Cain have their ages mentioned. This is because their years on earth were wasted, worthless years filled with wickedness. They lived for self and for Satan.

The Birth of Another Son and Grandson of Adam The Godly Line of Seth

4:25-26 – *“And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.”* Our first parents were comforted in their affliction by the birth of another son whom they called Seth. This name means *“set, settled, or placed.”* In his seed mankind should continue to the end of time, and from him the Messiah should descend. The true Church would come from Seth, a man who was fixed. We can only truly be settled in Christ and His Church.

Seth walked in the steps of his martyred brother Abel. He was a partaker of like precious faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. As such, he became a fresh witness of the grace and influence of God the Holy Spirit. God caused Adam and Eve to see a marvellous spiritual awakening in their family. The worshippers of God began to emerge. Some, by an open profession of true religion, protested against the wickedness of the world around. The worse others are, the better we should be. The distinction between the righteous and the profane began, and has been kept up ever since, and will be, while the world stands.

5:1-2 – *“This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.”* In chapter 5 we have a record of the godly line, from Adam to Noah. The age of each man in the godly line is given, in contrast to Cain’s descendants whose ages are not given.

God blessed Adam and Eve, and called their name Adam in the day that He created them. Man was the head of woman, even before the Fall. The woman was made for the man, to be his helper. The Fall and consequential Curse did not place man over the woman.

5:3-5 – *“And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth. And the days of Adam after he had begotten Seth with eight hundred years: and he begat sons and daughters: And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died.”* Seth begins the godly line of patriarchs that extends for ten generations until Noah, the man of rest.

5:6-14 – *“And Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos: And Seth lived after he begat Enos eight hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of*

Seth were nine hundred and twelve years: and he died. And Enos lived ninety years, and begat Cainan: And Enos lived after he begat Cainan eight hundred and fifteen years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enos were nine hundred and five years: and he died. And Cainan lived seventy years, and begat Mahalaleel: And Cainan lived after he begat Mahalaleel eight hundred and forty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years: and he died.”

Enos means “humanity or mortal.” He was conscious that man is on earth but for a short time. Moses prayed, “Teach us O Lord to number well our days that we might apply ourselves to wisdom” (Ps. 90:12). These great men understood our frailty. Life is fleeting and we must make every day count for eternity (Eph. 5:16-17).

Cainan (Kenan) means “acquisition” or “redeemed.” The truth God made real to Cainan was that we are not our own, we are bought with a price. The world and those who follow the way of Cain say, “It’s my life and I will do what I want.” Another implication of Cainan’s name (“acquisition”) is that we should acquire those things that are eternal. In the New Testament, Jesus tells us to buy of Him gold tried in the fire (Rev. 3:18). This speaks of having our faith and other virtues purified by the tests of life—thus developing qualities that will endure for all eternity.

5:15-32 – *“And Mahalaleel lived sixty and five years, and begat Jared: And Mahalaleel lived after he begat Jared eight hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Mahalaleel were eight hundred ninety and five years: and he died. And Jared lived an hundred sixty and two years, and he begat Enoch: And Jared lived after he begat Enoch eight hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Jared were nine hundred sixty and two years: and he died. And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. And Methuselah lived an hundred eighty and seven years, and begat Lamech: And Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred sixty and nine years: and he died. And Lamech lived an hundred eighty and two years, and begat a son: And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD hath cursed. And Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Lamech were seven hundred seventy and seven years: and he died. And Noah was five hundred years old: and Noah begat Shem, Ham, and Japheth.”*

Mahalaleel means “Praisers of God.” He was a deep worshipper and praiser of the Lord. Even prior to the Flood these patriarchs understood that the Lord is Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Worship is the key to becoming like the Lord, for we become like the object or person we worship. Cain’s line worshipped self and Satan, and it showed in the fruit they produced.

Jared means “descending.” The truth of which God made Jared so conscious was that there was a serious downward plunge in morality in his generation; thus judgment was coming. Natural man was waxing worse and worse, though they thought they were getting better and wiser.

Enoch means “instructed one.” He was a teacher of righteousness, a prophet who declared the Second Coming of the Lord (Jude 1:14). He also was the type of those who shall be raptured without seeing death. He had the testimony that he pleased God, and God took him (Heb. 11:5). Enoch walked with God for 300 years. According to *the law of first mention* the number 300 is used to denote “walking with God.” Therefore, hereafter that number signifies walking with God. Noah’s ark was 300 cubits in length, showing that only those who were walking with God could enter.

Methuselah means “at his death shall the waters flow.” His father, Enoch, named him prophetically. The patriarchs were prophets who knew that there was a forthcoming judgment upon the world through the Flood. Methuselah died the same year of the Flood.

Lamech means “overcomer” or “strong” in the sense of doing good. He died at the age of 777 years. Seven is the number of perfection; thus 777 speaks of a man perfect in body, soul, and spirit.

He named his son Noah (which means “rest”), indicating that he would bring the godly into rest and comfort them concerning the work of their hands. This showed that life was not easy for the descendants of Adam, due to the curse that had been placed upon the earth because of his sin.

Noah was the man upon whom the salvation of all people before the Flood rested. He was, after all, the link between them and Christ, the Seed of the Woman who would bring redemption.

CHRONOLOGY FOR GENESIS

The First 20 Generations

Genesis 5; 9:28; 11:10-26

PATRIARCH	TOTAL AGE	BIRTH	DEATH	AGE WHEN SON BORN
1. Adam	930	4004 B.C.	3074 B.C.	130
2. Seth	912	3874 B.C.	2962 B.C.	105
3. Enos	905	3769 B.C.	2864 B.C.	90
4. Cainan	910	3679 B.C.	2769 B.C.	70
5. Mahaleel	895	3609 B.C.	2714 B.C.	65
6. Jared	962	3544 B.C.	2582 B.C.	162
7. Enoch	365	3382 B.C.	Never Died	65
8. Methusaleh	969	3317 B.C.	2348 B.C.	187
9. Lamech	777	3130 B.C.	2353 B.C.	182
10. Noah	950	2948 B.C.	1998 B.C.	502
11. Shem	600	2446 B.C.	1846 B.C.	100
12. Arphaxad	438	2346 B.C.	1908 B.C.	35
13. Salah	433	2311 B.C.	1878 B.C.	30
14. Eber	464	2281 B.C.	1817 B.C.	34
15. Peleg	239	2247 B.C.	2008 B.C.	30
16. Reu	239	2217 B.C.	1978 B.C.	32
17. Serug	230	2185 B.C.	1955 B.C.	30
18. Nahor	148	2155 B.C.	2007 B.C.	29
19. Terah	205	2126 B.C.	1921 B.C.	70
20. Abraham	175	2056 B.C.	1881 B.C.	100

All dates are based on the supposition that 4004 B.C. is the year Adam was formed. Some chronologists place the date 30 or 40 years later (around 3,975 B.C.).

God extended long life to the early patriarchs for the purpose of accumulating knowledge. They had to start everything from the beginning. In every area of science and learning, man had nothing to begin with; he had no reference points. Every invention and witty device is usually the product of accumulated discoveries and information gained from others and by observing what has gone before. But man had nothing to look back to.

All of the above men were prophets and men of great wisdom. By Abraham's time and even long before him, they understood the stars, sciences, music, metals, building, medicine, and many other areas of learning. This is seen in the Book of Job, and Job lived before Abraham. There were 10 generations from Adam to Noah, and then another 10 generations to the call of Abraham. All these men were in the Messianic line (Lk. 3:34-38).

PART FIVE

The Flood

6:1 - 9:29

The Intermingling of the Lines

6:1-2 – *“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose.”*

The most remarkable thing concerning the old world is its destruction by the deluge, or flood. We are told in these verses of the abounding iniquity of that wicked era and God’s just wrath and His holy resolution to punish that wicked generation. In all ages there has been a peculiar curse upon marriages between professors of true faith and true faith’s avowed enemies.

The evil example of the ungodly spouse corrupts or greatly injures the other spouse. Family religion is brought to an end, and the children are trained up according to the worldly maxims of that parent who is without the fear of God. If we profess to be the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, we must not marry without His consent. He will never give His blessing if we prefer beauty, wit, wealth, or worldly honours, instead of faith and holiness.

6:3 – *“And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.”* The Spirit of God strove with men by sending Enoch, Noah, and other prophets to preach to them. His longsuffering, forbearance, and graciousness postponed His anger for 120 years.

However, there comes a time when God, if repeatedly spurned, will no longer extend mercy to those who are unrepentant. He will leave them to be hardened in sin and ripened for destruction. This judgment He determined, because man was flesh—not only frail and feeble, but also carnal and depraved.

In His mercy, the Lord remembers that man is but flesh with all his weaknesses. Therefore, instead of completely annihilating all flesh from off the face of the earth, the Lord gave continuance to man through the progeny of Noah.

This is the first mention of the number 120. In biblical numerics, it symbolises “the end of all flesh.” This number signifies the end of something, and the beginning of something new. For example, at the dedication of the Temple of Solomon and at the inauguration of the Church on the Day of Pentecost, there were new spiritual beginnings for the people of God.

6:4 – *“There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”* The word “giants” has drawn much speculation in recent years. Some have suggested that these giants were fallen angels, yet angels do not marry and have children. The term “sons of God” is applied in Scripture equally to angels and saints alike (Job 1:6, 2:1). Nonetheless, we must pay attention to the words of Christ Himself who clearly stated that angels do not marry (Mt. 22:30; Mk. 12:25; Lk. 20:34-36).

The Hebrew word for giants is *nephilim*, meaning “a bully or tyrant.” Nephilim comes from *naphal*, which signifies “to fall upon.” The implication given is that those born to this intermingling of the lines were tyrants or warriors who dominated the population by fear. They were men of violence who fell upon their neighbours and murdered them. Do not make a grandiose doctrine over the subject of these giants as some have. The Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to avoid myths and speculations. Fables and endless genealogies only minister more questions. They neither edify nor produce faith, but only create more questions (1 Tim. 1:4).

6:5 – *“And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”* Anyone might see that the wickedness of man was great, but God saw deeper—the heart filled with deceit and desperately wicked. The principles were corrupt; the habits and dispositions were evil. They did evil deliberately.

6:6-7 – *“And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.”* God viewed man’s wickedness as a tender father sees the folly and stubbornness of a rebellious and disobedient child who grieves him, and makes him wish he had been childless.

God hates sin. If God was so grieved in His heart because of our sin that He regretted making man, shall not we be cut to the heart because of our sin? Oh that we may look on Him whom we have grieved, and mourn! God repented that He had made man; but we never find Him repent that He redeemed man.

God resolved to destroy that generation. The original rendering is very striking: “I will wipe off man from the earth” (as dirt or filth is wiped off from a place which should be clean, and is thrown to the dunghill, the proper place for it). God made this firm decision after His Spirit had been long striving with man in vain. God’s justice would punish those who refused and hated to be reformed by His grace and mercy. It is not God who is judging man as much as man who has refused the goodness of God and judged himself unworthy of everlasting life (Acts 13:46).

This is an aspect of the character of God that we must never underestimate, namely that He is a God of judgment as Paul states in Romans 11:22, “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” The Gentiles are cautioned against pride and unbelief because the Jews shall be called as a nation again, and brought into God’s visible covenant. Paul tells us to consider both extremes of God’s character—the goodness and the severity of God. We cannot fathom the love of God, but we also cannot fathom His anger or judgment. Judgment is eternal!

The Life and Times of Noah

Noah Finds Grace

6:8 – *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”* The key factor in life is to find grace and favour in the sight of God, for all things come from God. He is the giver of wisdom and He is the one who has planned our lives. His divine plan can only be fulfilled by His grace (which translates into His divine enablement) to accomplish His will upon earth. Some keys to being the recipient of God’s grace: humility (Jas. 4:6, cf. 1 Ki. 21:27-29), ordering our conversation aright (Ps. 45:2; 50:23), and walking in the fear of the Lord (Job 28:28).

The Generations of Noah

6:9-13 – *“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God. And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence, And God looked upon the earth, and behold it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me: for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.”*

The following aspects of the life and times of Noah are important in that the Lord Himself likened the last days to the times of Noah (Mt. 24:37, Lk. 17:26). Noah was spared; and we are

told in our day that we should pray that we might be counted worthy to escape those things that are shortly to come upon the earth. “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man” (Lk. 21:36).

The prophet Zephaniah reminds us that in order to be preserved in the times of judgment, we have to meet certain conditions, “Seek ye the LORD, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness: it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the LORD’S anger” (Zeph. 2:3). This is a message to believers, to those who have wrought his judgments. There is no guarantee that we will be preserved (1 Pet. 3:19-20).

Noah was a just and a righteous man who always did those things that were right in God’s sight. Also, he was perfect (or blameless); there was nothing for which he could be reproached. He was undefiled by the corruption of his day. He shined like a star in a den of iniquity.

Furthermore, Noah walked with God as had his great grandfather Enoch. He had a close relationship with God, and out of that relationship he knew the secrets of God and understood that the Flood was coming. He was Spirit-led and accomplished all that the Lord had ordained for him in this life. He is reckoned along with Daniel and Job as one of the three most righteous men who ever lived (Ezek. 14:14, 20).

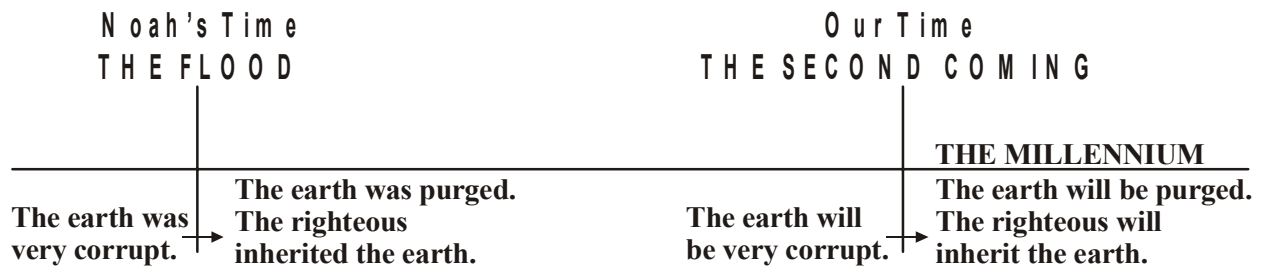
Noah was a courageous preacher of righteousness who was willing to be reproached for his message (2 Pet. 2:5). Moreover, he was a man of vision who was willing to redeem the time because the days were evil (Eph. 5:15-17). According to the teachings of Christ, the meek shall inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5). Noah literally inherited the whole earth after the whole world perished in the Flood. A perfect picture of meekness is portrayed for us in 1 Peter 2:23. His three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, repopulated the earth and from them (as we shall see later) caused three distinct lines to become established in the earth.

Today the state of mankind is similar to the pre-flood era. We are living in a period likened to “the days of Noah” by our Lord Jesus Christ. One aspect mentioned in Genesis 6:13 is that of violence which is breaking out everywhere and virtually in all countries. Yet, in the midst of the thick darkness and gloom that is presently enveloping the nations, the Lord promises to shine through His people as He did through Noah to his generation. “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1-2).

Reasons Noah Was Preserved

1. *Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord* (Gen. 6:8).
2. *Noah was a righteous man* (Ezek. 14:14, 20).
3. *Noah walked with God* (Gen. 6:9).
4. *Noah was a man of faith who feared the Lord* (Heb. 11:7).
5. *Noah was a preacher of righteousness* (2 Pet. 2:5).
6. *Noah was a man of vision who redeemed the time* (Eph. 5:15-17).
7. *Noah was meek*

Noah’s Time is Similar to Today



Noah preserved the entire human race, and also all animal life. The whole world was spared through the sacrifice and obedience of one righteous man. One man or one woman can make a difference in the world. D.L. Moody said, “The world is yet to see what God can do through one individual who is totally surrendered to Him.” May you and I be that person!

Noah Warned of the Flood The Directions Regarding the Ark

6:14-16 – *“Make thee an ark of gopher [cypress] wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, and the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.”*

Scriptural measurements have great spiritual significance. Therefore when we consider a building as important as the Ark we would do well to examine its dimensions that God gave when He commanded Noah to construct this ship. The Ark has endured for nearly 4,000 years, hidden in the ice of Mount Ararat.

The measurements not only reveal the qualifications for entering the Ark, but they also reveal the qualifications for us to be preserved in the times of the coming tribulation. (Do not change cubits to feet and inches, as divine numbers are important.)

Gopher wood speaks of a type of grace; a requirement for salvation and preservation. Pitch was used to seal the ark. This speaks of the importance of not letting the truths you hear seep out through neglect. Do not let your salvation be lost. Lay hold of eternal life, and hold on to the things God gives you (Heb. 2:1).

The *length* of the Ark was 300 cubits which signifies walking with God, and being in harmony or at one with the Lord. Its *breadth* was 50 cubits, which speaks of redemption and restoration. This Ark redeemed from destruction those that were in it from the judgments that were pouring forth upon the earth in the form of rain. The *height* was 30 cubits which speaks of being in God's service or wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord. There was only one window, which was one cubit square, and this speaks of singleness of eye towards the Lord (Isa. 52:8).

The Ark did not have a rudder or a sail, which speaks of the fact that God guided them. This shows that God alone is to be our Guide. The Ark rested on Mount Ararat, which speaks of holiness. We must put our lives in God's hands. He will bring us to the right place at the right time (Isa. 57:13, Ps. 24:3-4, Heb. 12:22), and will bring us into rest.

Many rooms were found in the Ark, and this corresponds to John 14:2-3 where the Lord Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not *so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also."

The three stories in the Ark could represent the three heavens mentioned by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:2. They depict the three levels of spiritual growth—little children, young men, and fathers (1 Jn. 2:12-14). There are many series of *three's* in Scripture. There were three sections to the Tabernacle of Moses.

The lower storey of the Ark which would speak of the Outer Court in the Tabernacle of Moses corresponds to the blessings of salvation as well as the baptisms of water and of the Holy Spirit. The second storey corresponds to the holy place in the tabernacle. In the Holy Place we can experience the anointings of the seven spirits of the Lord, as well as become broken bread for the multitudes. Then there is the altar of incense, which speaks of a life of prayer. The third storey speaks of the Holy of Holies and the consequent blessing of having the law written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts.

There was one door, which speaks of Christ alone as the Door to salvation (Jn. 10:9). God was the One who shut the door. When He closes the door, it is too late. This is true, not only of salvation, but also of having God's best for our lives. The five foolish virgins were denied entrance into the wedding feast, and God shut the door (Mt. 25:10). They did not go to hell, but they were not allowed to partake of the wedding feast.

These five virgins represent lax Christians who will not be able to rule and reign with Christ when He comes to rule in the Millennial Age. Many in the Church are like the five foolish virgins; they do not take God's message of coming judgment to heart. There are many believers who will not be preserved when judgment comes in the form of the Great Tribulation. It was the same way in Noah's time. The early generations had not seen rain. Many in the line of Seth tried to open the door to get in but could not because God had shut the door.

The fact that only eight souls were saved from the waters (1 Pet. 3:20) speaks nonetheless of a new life, and that Noah began a new dispensation and passed from one generation to another. This is analogous to those who qualify to pass from this age into the Millennium. Revelation 20:6 says that we must be "blessed and holy" to have a part in the first resurrection. May we so qualify.

The Ark

Means of Salvation and Preservation in Judgment

- *Gopher Wood* – (or cypress) – a type of grace
- *Pitch* – seal the truths God has taught
- *Length* – 300 cubits – walking with God
- *Breadth* – 50 cubits – redemption, restoration, rejoicing, and liberty
- *Height* – 30 cubits – being wholly dedicated to the service of the Lord
- *One Window on Top* – singleness of vision
- *Three Stories* – the three heavens, and the three degrees of spiritual growth
- *No Rudder or Sail* – God alone is to guide our lives
- *Rested on Mount Ararat* – holiness and rest
- *Many Rooms* – many mansions in heaven
- *The Door* – Christ alone is the door to salvation

Three Types of Believers

There were three types of believers in Noah's day, as there will be in our day. This corresponds to Revelation chapter 12 where one group (the Man-child) is translated before the tribulation.

These are a choice group within the Church. The Woman (or Bride) is preserved through the tribulation, and “the Remnant of her Seed” (many other Outer Court believers) will be exposed to persecution.

In the Days of Noah	In the Last Days	Divisions
Enoch	The Man Child	Raptured
Noah	The Woman	Protected
Sometimes Disobedient	The Remnant	Judged

This last group mentioned in 1 Peter 3:19-20 believed the Flood was coming, but had the attitude that it would not come in their time. The Apostle Peter says they were *sometimes disobedient* while the ark was being prepared. When Christ died on the cross, He descended into the lower parts of the earth and preached to these people. They were believers, but they missed what God was doing in their day. They drowned in the Flood, but their souls were saved. They made it to heaven but they missed what God was doing in their generation, and were exposed to the judgments upon the earth. Their reward will be meagre compared to that of those who are faithful.

6:17-21 – *“And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons’ wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive. And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them.”*

Note the tender, compassionate caring of our loving God in His concern for the food of one and all for their sojourn in the Ark. Are we not of greater value than these? As the Lord Jesus said, as we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, He will provide for all of our needs (Mt. 6:33).

Noah’s Faith and Obedience

6:22 – *“Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.”* Noah was completely obedient. It required faith to believe everything God had told him. After all, it had never rained before. Nevertheless, Noah built the ark exactly as God had commanded.

How Could All the Animals Fit in the Ark?

The ark was 300 cubits long. This is around 450 feet. It had three stories, and hundreds of rooms. The volume was equal to well over 500 freight cars of a train. If you have ever had to unload a freight car, you know how large it is. It is considerably bigger than a tractor-trailer. Just to stretch your imagination a little more, it has been calculated that all of the world's population, standing shoulder to shoulder, could fit into less than half the city limits of Jacksonville, Florida. At first this may seem unbelievable, but when one figures it out, it is logical and true. The city limits amount to 278 square miles, or 16 x 17 miles. All of the earth's 5 billion plus people can fit into *less than half* the city limits of one American city. Could all of the animals fit into the ark? Of course!

Safe in the Ark

7:1 – *“And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.”* The Lord reiterated the reason why Noah was chosen to be preserved. It was because he had been found righteous before God in his generation.

7:2-3 – *“Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female. Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of the earth.”* The Lord commanded Noah to take of every fowl, beast, and insect to bring them into the ark. (Seven pairs of those who were clean, and two of the unclean.) This obviously was a work of the Spirit of God. Noah would not have been able to round up and bring in all those animals two by two.

Genesis 7:15 says, *“And they went in unto Noah into the ark...”* This is reminiscent of the capture of 300 foxes by Samson in Judges 15:4, when he joined them tail to tail and put a firebrand in between their two tails. The Spirit of the Lord must have caused those foxes first to congregate at that place and then to quietly wait until Samson had tied the tails. In like manner the Spirit of the Lord must have come upon the multitude of the children of Israel to cause them to go up from Egypt in an orderly manner.

The Clean and Unclean

Why did God create clean and unclean animals? He did so to teach his people spiritual lessons. Everything God has created has a divine meaning. The clean and unclean animals embody spiritual truths that instruct us in the ways of holiness. They show us the difference between the holy and profane (Ezek. 44:23).

Consider the following examples: peacocks speak of pride. They love to trot back and forth and show off their feathers when they have an audience. Doves have no gall bladder. Gall speaks of bitterness. A dove has no bitterness. The Holy Spirit is symbolised by a dove, and He is easily grieved and quenched by bitterness.

A lamb speaks of meekness, and is characterised by submission and the lack of retaliation. A goat speaks of rebellion. He butts and defies those who cross his will. A ferret knows how to get around things, and he represents rationalisation. Where there is rain (symbol of the Holy Spirit), 90 percent of the creatures live above ground and in the light. Where there is no rain, 90 percent of the creatures live below the ground. Demons thrive in places where there is no rain and no anointing.

7:4-5 – *“For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him.”* Noah and his family went into the ark seven days before the Flood. This is a type of the last great judgment that would overtake the earth at the end of the seventh day or the seventh thousandth year of this creation. After the 7,000 years of man, this earth is destroyed and there is a new heaven and earth (Rev. 21:1).

7:6 – *“And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth.”* The Flood came in the six hundredth year of Noah’s life. Six is the number of man, and 100 speaks of being a hundredfold Christian. Noah was a man who was extremely fruitful as was Isaac, and also the man in Christ’s parable who brought forth a hundredfold (Mt. 13:23).

7:7-11 – *“And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood. Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah. And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the foundations of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.”*

The second month is associated with the theme of “witness.” The Temple of Solomon began in the second month, and God was witness. But here we have the thought of a divine witness of God’s displeasure with the inhabitants of Noah’s day in that the Flood also began on the seventeenth day. Seventeen is composed of two numbers, 10 + 7. Ten speaks of the law, and seven speaks of perfection. The laws of God were broken and the people did not come to perfection. Therefore through transgression of the laws of God, the people of Noah’s age had fallen short of the glory of God.

7:12 – *“And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights.”* The rain continued for forty days and nights. Forty signifies trials and provings. In this *law of first mention* it has the connotation of judgment. Forty occurs in many other instances, such as the 40 years of Israel’s journey in the wilderness, which was likewise a judgment for disobedience.

We know Moses was in the wilderness 40 years because he slew an Egyptian. Moses also went up twice into the mount for 40 days later on in his life. Then we have the Lord Jesus Christ who was tempted by Satan for 40 days. In each case, it signified a time of separation, purification, trials, and provings.

7:13-16 – *“In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah’s wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark; They, and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life. And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the Lord shut him in.”* Then this narrative closes with the sombre words—“the Lord shut him in.” It has that same air of *finality* with which the parable of the ten virgins terminates—“the door was shut” (Mt. 25:10). At that moment there was no further hope for those who were on the outside.

The Flood

7:17-24 – *“And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth. And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters. And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.”*

The account in Genesis 7:11 states, *“...the fountains of the great deep were broken up.”* This signifies that the underground fountains and rivers burst forth upon the earth, whilst the continuous rain would have caused those natural rivers to become torrents that swept everything before them.

This judgment can only be described as cataclysmic in proportions, for no human remedy could avert a disaster of that magnitude.

When the mighty Mississippi in mid-America overflowed its banks during the early 1990's, incredible devastation ensued over numerous counties throughout its course. Those who have seen Bangladesh in the rainy season have some idea of the awesome magnitude of the havoc and hopelessness that floods produce. The rivers come down from the high hills of Meghalaya in the northeast of India, and especially from Cherrapundi, which has over 800 inches of rain in six months. However, even in these times of disaster there have always been islands of safety to which victims have been taken to in order to be housed and cared for.

In the days of Noah no such refuges were permitted by God. The relics of the bones of animals who no doubt sought refuge from the ever-increasing onslaught of the waters which relentlessly rose ever higher until, have been found in caves high up in the mountainsides. We read that all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered. Only Noah and his family remained alive.

The Abatement of the Waters

8:1 – *“And God remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged. The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; And the waters returned from off the earth continually: and after the end of the hundred and fifty days the waters were abated.”* This passage starts with the awesome phrase “And God remembered.” How often in our own lives do we cry out, “O God, please remember me!” in our own particular times of distress?

Another scriptural occurrence of the fact that God remembers is recorded for us in Exodus 2:24, “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” This refers to the deliverance that the Lord accorded to the children of Israel in Egyptian captivity when He sent Moses, His anointed prophet, to lead them out of that land. God remembers the cry of His prisoners and those who turn to Him with all of their heart.

The waters were assuaged by the wind, the fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven being stopped. The waters decreased continually for 150 days. This same period of time is mentioned in Revelation 9:5. It is also in the setting of judgment, when the fifth trumpet sounds and the bottomless pit is opened, and Apollyon and his hordes of hybrid monsters are released upon the earth for a period of five months which translates into 150 days. The numerical and spiritual significance of

150 is 15 x 10. 15 symbolises “divine judgment” or “separation” because the commandments or the laws of God (10) were not kept.

8:4-6 – *“And the ark rested in the seventh month, on the seventeenth day of the month, upon the mountains of Ararat. And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month: in the tenth month, on the first day of the month, were the tops of the mountains seen. And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the window of the ark which he had made.”* The Ark rested in the seventh month and on the seventeenth day, which is the time that the Feast of Tabernacles would later be celebrated, thus denoting a time of rest and blessing.

Then the waters decreased until the first day of the tenth month, when the tops of the mountains were seen. Mount Ararat means “holy land,” and that is where the Ark is today. Ararat is in eastern Armenia, now a part of Turkey. The last Czar of Russia had underwritten an expedition led by a military officer to find the location of the ark, but the Bolshevik revolution came before they arrived at the mountains. However, in subsequent years it has been sighted, held in the ice of that region.

Mount Ararat was especially suited for the landing place of the ark and the propagation of the future generations. It lies on the longest land route from the Bering straits in Russia to the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. Likewise, it enabled the ancient settlers to descend from those highlands down into the rich and fertile lands of the Mesopotamian Crescent. Thus forming the first of the post-diluvian civilisations in the Babylonian area, of which we will speak expressly at a later time.

Difference Between the Raven and Dove

8:7-12 – *“And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf plucked off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more.”*

The sending forth of the raven from the Ark was to determine whether or not there was vegetation available; but the raven went to and fro landing upon the rotting carcasses, which provided rest and food for the unclean bird. On the other hand, the sending forth of the dove took several expeditions, since the dove would only settle on places that were clean and dry, being a clean animal.

The second time the dove was sent forth, it brought back an olive leaf (which will even grow under water). This was the symbol of peace and new life, and the resurrection of the human race. There were *three* seven-day periods associated with the sending forth of the dove. These three “sevens” are likened by some to the possibility of receiving from the Lord that divine grace whereby we can now be sanctified wholly—in body, soul, and spirit (1 Th. 5:23).

Exiting from the Ark

8:13-19 – *“And it came to pass in the six hundredth and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from off the earth: and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and, behold, the face of the ground was dry. And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dried. And God spake unto Noah, saying, Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons’ wives with thee. Bring forth with thee every living thing that is with thee, of all flesh, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth; that they may breed abundantly in the earth, and be fruitful, and multiply upon the earth. And Noah went forth, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him: Every beast, every creeping thing, and every fowl, and whatsoever creepeth upon the earth, after their kinds, went forth out of the ark.”*

It was on the second month and the twenty-seventh day of the six hundred and first year of Noah’s life that God commanded righteous Noah to leave the Ark. Thus, they had been in the Ark for a little over a year, certainly a feat of God’s grace (compare with 7:11). Difficult and confining circumstances are sometimes a means of our deliverance. Judging from the scriptural contexts in which the number 27 is used, we may adduce that the spiritual connotations point to “release and reward” (2 Ki. 25:27; Ezek. 29:17-21).

The Altar of Noah

8:20-22 – *“And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease.”*

“*The LORD smelled a sweet savour.*” This means literally “a smell of satisfaction.” God was well pleased with Noah’s offerings and his life. Consequent to his release, the patriarch showed his

gratitude and acknowledged God’s gracious deliverance to him and his family by building an altar. Noah placed an offering, one of every clean beast unto God, upon this altar. The Lord most graciously responded with the following promises:

1. That He would not again curse the earth for man’s sake.
2. That He would not again smite every living thing.
3. That the seasons would be predictable.

“For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” We are born with the propensity to do evil. This is the fallen nature. It is easier to deal with problems when we are younger. Problems gain a tremendous stronghold, as we grow older. We literally become “set in our ways” and it is very hard to change, outside of a miracle. It is much easier to bend a tender little sapling than a mighty oak. Therefore, deal with the issues in your life when you are young, and the issues in your children when they are young.

In these verses, God was establishing the seasons to make nature predictable. He promised that the seasons would always flow in their sequence. Evidently this carries over into the millennial age too, although some of the Curse will be lifted from the earth at that time and the weather will not be quite as severe.

The Blessings of God

9:1 – *“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.”* The Lord then pronounced a blessing upon them and gave a threefold command. The third command is a repetition of what God had said to Adam and Eve. The human race was starting all over again. It would appear that this *triple* command applies also to us as Christians:

1. *To be fruitful* – to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23
2. *To multiply* – to bring many to Christ (Mk. 16:15)
3. *To replenish the earth* – to have a world vision to produce spiritual kings and priests (Rev. 5:9-10)

9:2 – *“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.”* The promise of God that man would once again have the dominion over all of God’s creation, this was originally given to Adam in Genesis 1:28.

9:3-4 – *“Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat.”* The

dietary laws were established in that man was permitted to eat green herbs and also meat, except that the imbibing of the blood of flesh was forbidden. This is a command not to drink blood. It is also upheld in the New Testament in Acts 15:20 and 29.

9:5-7 – *“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man. And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.”* The law of murder was clearly delineated. Whosoever shed the blood of man would have to give an account unto the Lord, because we are made in the image of the Almighty. Verse six is strong support for the death penalty for murder (Num. 35:30-34). It closes with the repeated exhortation to be fruitful and multiply.

The Token of the Noahic Covenant

9:8-17 – *“And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; And with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the waters of a flood; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth.”*

To ensure that mankind remembered God’s promise to never again destroy the earth by a flood, the Lord gave a token—the rainbow. This rainbow appears in the rain clouds and has seven colours—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. These correspond to the seven Spirits of the Lord (Isa. 11:2), that anointing and glory that envelops the throne of God (Rev. 4:3). Ezekiel 1:28 also describes the brightness and glory of these colours around the chariot throne of God.

We must balance this thought, that the Lord will not destroy the earth again by a flood with the words of the Apostle Peter, for after the 7,000 years of man are expired, this earth will be destroyed by fire.

Peter begins his attack on those who doubt the truth of Christ's return by referring to the dependability of God's Word as demonstrated in Creation.

The judgment of the Flood in the days of Noah also demonstrates the truthfulness of God's Word and the fact that He has dramatically intervened in the past. Although God has promised never to destroy this earth again with a flood, it will be dissolved by fire *after* the Millennium.

2 Peter 3:5-7 clearly says, "For this [escapes their notice willingly], that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, *reserved unto fire* against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."

The Sons of Noah The Shame of Ham

9:18-27 – *"And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."*

Shem, Ham, and Japheth were the three sons of Noah by whom the whole earth was repopulated. Not long after the Flood Noah was drunken through the wine from the vineyard he had planted. Ham saw the nakedness of his father and promptly told his brothers. They, in turn, walking backwards covered their father. Noah's drunkenness may have been accidental, possibly because vegetation may have changed after the Flood and wine fermentation was different. Notwithstanding, there is no record of a reprimand of Noah from God. Also, God respected and honoured the other two brothers for covering their father's nakedness.

When Noah awoke, his curse came upon Canaan, Ham's son. Noah was a prophet. The curse pronounced upon Ham was God's sentence, not Noah's. The fact that the curse came upon Canaan

gives rise to many interesting suppositions; namely that Canaan was already following in the impiety and sensual lusts of his father Ham, who was a tyrant to those beneath him, as well as rebellious or mocking to those who were above him. The name Canaan means “the submissive one.” This submissiveness was not out of piety, but rather it denoted the obedience that his tyrannical father Ham required, but would not himself give to his own father, Noah.

“Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.” Canaan’s judgment included the resignation of being a slave of slaves, and it became a name given to his descendants and finally to the land wherein they dwelt. It should be noted that although the curse fell specifically upon Canaan, yet it obviously came on Ham and all his seed, for no blessing was accorded him as was given to his two brethren. Observe the following characteristics of Ham:

1. Ham did not honour his parents.
2. He was a sower of discord among his brethren, something God hates (Prov. 6:16-19).
3. He had no fear of God, even after being spared from the Flood.
4. He was not afraid to speak against God’s anointed.
5. He was loose and careless and thought nothing of exposing the confidential things of others.
6. He was unthankful for all God had done for him. Ingratitude is the first step to backsliding.
7. He was not respected by God and was cursed by Him.

God was going to judge Ham through his son Canaan. In the same way that Ham brought shame to his father Noah, Canaan and his descendants would bring grief to Ham. God often judges people through their children. We reap what we have sown into our children. God visits the iniquity of the fathers upon their children.

Canaan was the father of the Canaanites whom Israel had to destroy because of their wickedness. Also out of Ham came the Egyptians. Egypt is called the Land of Ham (Ps. 78:51, 105:23, 106:22). Nimrod was a descendant of Ham through another son, Cush. Nimrod built Babel (Babylon), and Nineveh (the capital of Assyria). Thus, the Canaanites, Egyptians, Babylonians, and Assyrians descended from Ham, and they were all the constant enemies of Israel and of God. This is the seed that Ham produced in the earth because of the unsundered and wicked areas of his life. He was filling the earth with a new breed of rebels. Man was already going away from God again through a man who had been so graciously preserved in the Flood.

9:28-29 – *“And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died.”* The account of the life of Noah ends with his death at the age of 950 years. He lived 350 years after the Flood, another 10 generations. He died

just two years before the birth of Abraham. Noah saw his seed turn from God, build Babel, and be scattered among the nations. The year of his death, by common consensus, would have been about 2006 years after creation, as the year of the Flood was 1656 years after creation, in his 600th year.

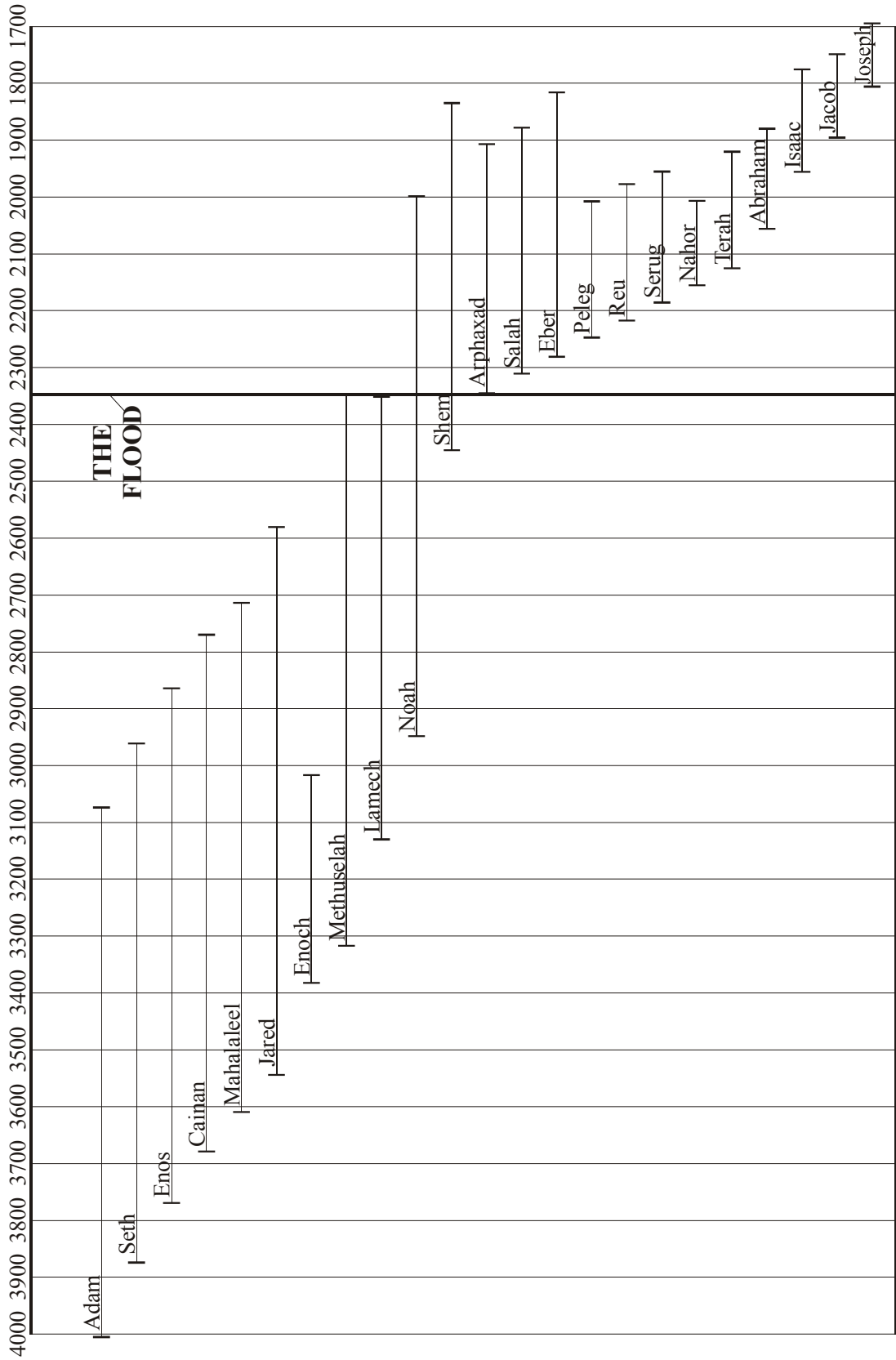
Divine Meaning of Numbers

God is a mathematical genius. Every number has a meaning, often more than one.

1	–	unity, oneness of purpose
2	–	witness, confirmation
3	–	trinity, deity
4	–	universal, world-wide
5	–	grace, separation, judgment
6	–	man, the flesh
7	–	perfection, completion, rest, also uncleanness
8	–	resurrection, new beginning, cleanliness
9	–	the Holy Spirit (9 gifts, 9 fruits)
10	–	trial, law, order
11	–	incomplete, confusion
12	–	government
13	–	rebellion, atonement
14	–	perfect witness (2 x 7)
15	–	divine separation (3 x 5)
17	–	perfection of spiritual order (7 + 10)
18	–	strength
20	–	maturity
30	–	divine service
40	–	trial, test
50	–	jubilee, release, restoration
60	–	bride
70	–	eldership
100	–	fullness
120	–	end of all flesh
200	–	a faithful servant's reward
250	–	division
300	–	walking with God
500	–	separation
666	–	all that appeals to the flesh—spirit, soul, body
1000	–	the millennium
1500	–	age of the law
2000	–	the Church Age
3000	–	Church Age and Millennium
7000	–	years allotted to man
10,000	–	a multitude that cannot be numbered

LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS

* All dates are based on the supposition that 4004 B.C. is the year Adam was formed.
 Some chronologists place the date 30 or 40 years later (c. 3975 B.C.).



PART SIX

The Dispersion of the Nations

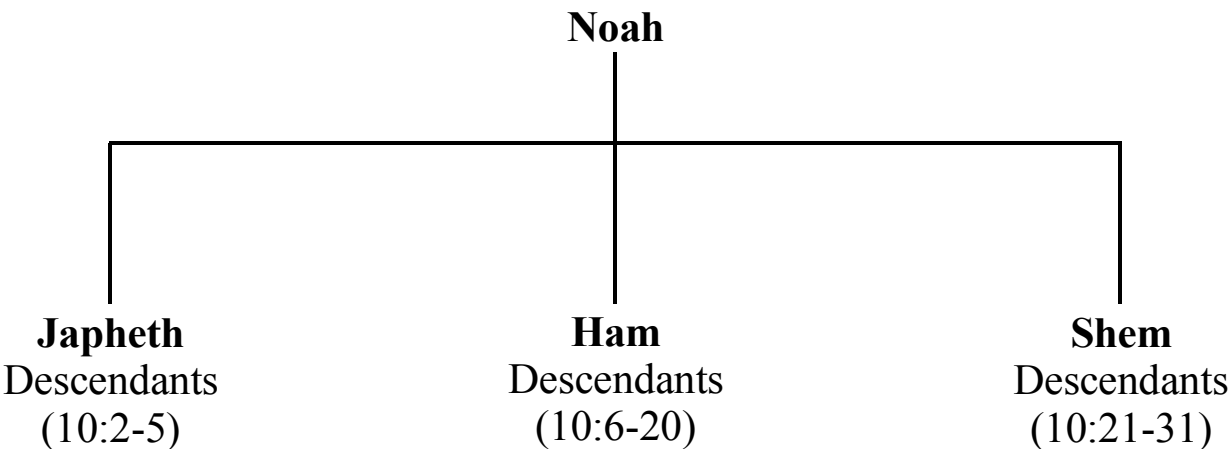
10:1 - 11:26

The Generations of the Sons of Noah

10:1 – “Now these are the generations of the sons of Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japheth: and unto them were sons born after the flood.” Genesis is not in perfect chronological order. It jumps ahead, and then comes back again. For example, in chapter 9:29 we are given the record of Noah’s death. Yet, in chapters 10 through 12, he is still alive. Noah witnessed the tower of Babel and lived until Abraham was 58 years old.

Chapter ten is important to those who wish to trace the origins of nations as far as that is possible with the limited amount of information that is given. There are, however, some names that are of specific importance to us, especially with respect to the interpretation of biblical prophecy for the end times. These we will consider in some detail.

THE TABLE OF NATIONS



The Nations That Descend from Japheth

10:2-5 – “The sons of Japheth; Gomer, and Magog, and Madai, and Javan, and Tubal, and Meshech, and Tiras. And the sons of Gomer; Ashkenaz, and Riphath, and Togarmah. And the sons of Javan;

Elishah, and Tarshish, Kittim, and Dodanim. By these were the isles of the Gentiles divided in their lands; every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations.” Gomer is one of the condemned peoples of the last days who will rise against Israel (Ezek. 38:6). *Magog* means literally the place of Gog. *Togarmah* is the name of the Armenians. *Tarshish* is associated with the name of a colony in Spain. *Kittim* is associated with those tribes that inhabited Cyprus. These tribes, descended from Japheth, therefore became the nations which populated Europe.

The Sons of Ham

10:6-20 – *“And the sons of Ham; Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan. And the sons of Cush; Seba, and Havilah, and Sabtah, and Raamah, and Sabtechah: and the sons of Raamah; Sheba, and Dedan. And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim. And Canaan begat Sidon his firstborn, and Heth, And the Jebusite, and the Amorite, and the Girgasite, And the Hivite, and the Arkite, and the Sinite, And the Arvadite, and the Zemarite, and the Hamathite: and afterward were the families of the Canaanites spread abroad. And the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon, as thou comest to Gerar, unto Gaza; as thou goest, unto Sodom, and Gomorrah, and Admah, and Zeboim, even unto Lasha. These are the sons of Ham, after their families, after their tongues, in their countries, and in their nations.”*

Ham’s descendants, according to the Psalms, settled in Egypt (Ps. 78:51; 105:27; 106:22), and therefore peopled the continent of Africa. The principal descendant of Ham (apart from Canaan) is Cush, whose son was the notorious Nimrod. Nimrod founded the first kingdom and his capital was Babylon. Then he went to Assyria and built Nineveh. With respect to the line of Ham, Asshur rebuilt Nineveh later on in spite of its plaguing of Israel, and was roundly condemned (Ezek. 32:22).

A little information about Babylon is needed for us to understand why Babylon is consistently mentioned in Scripture, usually as the centre of God’s judgments. Semiramis, the wife of Nimrod, who lived just a few centuries after the Flood, was the founder of the cult called “Mystery Babylon.” This religion featured a woman with a golden cup filled with a potion, said to be composed of honey, wine, water, and flour, which was given to those who wished to be initiated into the so-called mysteries. This made them drunk, and dulled their awareness to the sinister aspects of this cult.

“Mystery Babylon” featured also the concept of the worship of the Mother and Child. The religion permeated all the nations of the world so that the prophet Jeremiah said, “Babylon hath been a golden cup in the LORD’S hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad” (Jer. 51:7). In reality the Lord permitted it so that those who do not love the truth would be given over by the Lord Himself to this false worship. It has its counterpart in the west in Roman Catholicism many centuries later.

The thought of its being a mystery was necessary since Shem was still alive in the days of Nimrod and Semiramis. Therefore, any form of idolatry was considered evil. Job expressed this abhorrence of idolatry years later. He disclaimed any involvement in the pagan worship of heavenly bodies, “If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand [referring to throwing a kiss of adoration]: This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above” (Job 31:26-28).

Mizraim is the original name for the land of Egypt, also settled by the sons of Ham, as mentioned earlier. In the days immediately after the Flood, Egypt was in its lower reaches a marshland due to the uncontrolled flooding of the Nile, according to Heroditus. Some see in the etymology of Mizraim “one who built banks.” Therefore, Mizraim was one who controlled the floodwaters of the river to produce arable and profitable land.

Another nation that is much mentioned with disdain in Scripture (and was certainly the enemy of Israel from the days of Samson onwards unto this very day) is Philistia. The Philistines are mentioned as coming out of Casluhim (Gen. 10:14). They are known today as the Palestinians. The sons of Canaan are also noteworthy as being the traditional enemies of Israel such as the Jebusites, Amorites, Girgasites, Hivites. They were also the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Sons of Shem

10:21-31 – *“Unto Shem also, the father of all the children of Eber, the brother of Japheth the elder, even to him were children born. The children of Shem; Elam, and Asshur, and Arphaxad, and Lud, and Aram. And the children of Aram; Uz, and Hul, and Gether, and Mash. And Arphaxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber. And unto Eber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg; for in his days was the earth divided; and his brother’s name was Joktan. And Joktan begat Almodad, and Sheleph, and Hazarmaveth, and Jerah, And Hadoram, and Uzal, and Diklah, And Obal, and Abimael, and Sheba, And Ophir, and Havilah, and Jobab: all these were the sons of Joktan. And their dwelling was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar a mount of the east. These are the sons of Shem, after their families, after their tongues, in their lands, after their nations.”*

The sons of Shem are important in that they are the line of Christ. Abraham is specifically mentioned as having descended from Shem through Eber from whom he takes his family name of “Hebrew.”

Peleg should be mentioned because “in his days was the earth divided.” From the shape of the continents today one can see where they once were fitted together into one landmass. The earth was believed to have been one great landmass at one time. In the days of Peleg, it is believed that this landmass broke up into the continents. This would have occurred probably at the time of the rebellion at Babel when God also divided the nations and scattered them all over the earth.

10:32 – *“These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.”* This is the key verse for chapter 10. (Please note that Genesis is not in perfect chronological order.) It jumps ahead, and then comes back again. In Genesis 9:29, Noah’s death is recorded. Yet, in Genesis chapters 10-12 he is still alive. As we have pointed out, Noah lived up to the time of Abraham and saw the dispersion of the nations.

While we are on the subject of nationalities, it would be wise to mention that it is not good to become *overly involved* with genealogies, nationalities, and races. Although some nations and families are essentially evil and others are better, God has some in every nation, tribe, tongue, and people who are ordained to become kings and priests unto Him (Rev. 5:9-10, 1 Tim. 1:4).

The Tower of Babel

11:1-4 – *“And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”*

It is clear that the original descendants of Noah left the plains around Mount Ararat and descended into the fertile valley in the east, which was the land of Shinar. Also they were not disposed to obey the original commandment of the Lord and inhabit the whole earth, instead they congregated around Babylon. Shinar is another name for Babel or Babylon, a city started by Nimrod, a mighty hunter *against* the Lord.

In noting that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech, Holy Scripture is intending to convey the thought that the peoples at that time were not united in holy bliss but in evil. Therefore

they could accomplish whatsoever they pleased. They used their unity for evil in rebellion against God. (Rev. 17:13 and Lk. 23:12 state where combined efforts are used for wickedness.)



The Tower of Babel was used for the worship of the heavenly bodies as seen above, and especially the moon. This is what they meant when they said, “Let us build us a tower whose top may reach unto heaven.” Each of the seven layers of the tower was for the worship of one of the heavenly planets. The top layer was for the worship of the moon. Worship of the stars started in Babylon, not long after the Flood. It was open rebellion against God. Astrology and every evil started in Babylon.

11:5-6 – *“And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.”*

The Lord knew the power of unity. Thus, God sent confusion to thwart their purposes and the unity that they were using for evil.

The Changing of the Languages Dispersion of the Nations

11:7-9 – *“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.”*

God confounded the people and changed their languages. Today there are over 5,400 languages and dialects in the world. It is believed that at this time God changed all the races, too. Then they were dispersed all over the world. This is the beginning of the nations. God determined beforehand all the boundaries of the nations (Deut. 32:8).

All these men at Babel were the *fathers* of the nations. All of them knew the right way, but rejected it and would not teach their children. (Compare with Romans 1:18-32.) The problem right from the beginning of time—man *knows* the way, but does not want to walk in it. Rebellion and a hardened heart are the chief sins of man. Man has always been prone to wander.

The Tower of Babel episode was only five short generations after the Flood. Although they all knew that the former world had been destroyed for their sins, they did not fear the Lord but walked in rebellion. All of the fathers of the nations had the light. Noah was alive at that time. Men and women refused the light (Jn. 3:19), choosing rather to love and embrace lies and delusions, and causing their children to walk in their ways. Refusing the light is the reason for the deplorable condition of the nations today.

The ruins of the tower remain unto this day having been destroyed by the fire from heaven above. The city will be rebuilt in its entirety by the Antichrist. Indeed, efforts for this have already been underway since the former president of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, was in power. It will finally be destroyed when the events recorded in Revelation chapter 18 are fulfilled.

The Chronology of the Descendants of Shem

11:10-26 – *“These are the generations of Shem: Shem was an hundred years old, and begat Arphaxad two years after the flood: And Shem lived after he begat Arphaxad five hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And Arphaxad lived five and thirty years, and begat Salah: And Arphaxad lived after he begat Salah four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. And Salah lived thirty years, and begat Eber: And Salah lived after he begat Eber four hundred and three years, and begat sons and daughters. And Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg: And Eber lived after he begat Peleg four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters. And Peleg lived thirty years, and begat Reu: And Peleg lived after he begat Reu two hundred and nine years, and begat sons and daughters. And Reu lived two and thirty years, and begat Serug: And Reu lived after he begat Serug two hundred and seven years, and begat sons and daughters. And Serug lived thirty years, and begat Nahor: And Serug lived after he begat Nahor two hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. And Nahor lived nine and twenty years, and begat Terah: And Nahor lived after he begat Terah an*

hundred and nineteen years, and begat sons and daughters. And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran.”

The year of the Flood was approximately 1656 years after Adam was formed. This genealogical table is given to show the direct descent of Abraham from Shem through Eber. At the birth of Abraham, Shem was still alive. In fact, Shem lived an astounding 502 years after the Flood. He lived to see Abraham be born and die. Moreover, he lived for another 35 years after Abraham's death. Even Noah was alive until two years before Abraham's birth. (These figures are calculated and based on the KJV Bible.)

PART SEVEN

The Life of Abraham

11:27 - 25:10

Abraham was the tenth generation from Noah. By this truth alone we are alerted to the fact that the Lord was indicating a new purpose and new beginning. He is a man of note and distinction.

The importance of the life of Abraham to us who are Christians is seen in Galatians 3:29, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Also we are told in Isaiah 51:2, “Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you.” Therefore, we should consider the lives of Abraham and Sarah because many of our experiences will be similar to those of our spiritual parents. Women especially are told to look at Sarah (1 Pet. 3:5-6).

Christ is the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Being in Christ makes the believer the seed of Abraham and heir of the promise of justification by faith (Gal. 3:8). National promises made to Abraham as the father of the Jewish people are not in view in verse 8, only the universal promise. Abraham had a natural seed (the Jews), and a spiritual seed (all believers). The promises made to Abraham’s physical seed and the physical land of Israel do not necessarily apply to the Church.

11:27-28 – *“Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.”* Abram had two brothers, Nahor and Haran. Haran died at a young age back in Ur, leaving his son Lot in the care of his uncle Abram. It seems clear from the scriptural narrative that Abram had shared his call with his father Terah. Yet, the Lord had called Abram *alone* (Isa. 51:2), not Terah, who had decided to take the whole family into the land of Canaan.

11:29-32 – *“And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram’s wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor’s wife, Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran.”*

However, as they journeyed toward Canaan, Terah (Abraham's father), and Nahor (Abraham's brother) stayed in a city they named Haran, after Abraham's deceased brother. After the death of Terah his father, Abram, resumed his journey to Canaan (Acts 7:4). Apparently, he took a large number of servants, whom he had acquired during his sojourn at Haran; so they must have stayed there a number of years. They tarried long enough for Terah and Nahor to become comfortable and the vision to have dimmed before their eyes.

The name Terah means "delay." Abram's father, Terah, delayed him from going on to the land of Canaan. Abram and Sarai had to make a break from their family ties before they could go on to what God purposed for their lives (Ps. 45:10-11, Mt. 10:37-39). Terah died at the age of 205. Abram was 75; which means Terah was 130 at Abram's birth. This is an important fact for chronology.

The Call of Abraham

By this time, virtually the whole world had strayed from God again after the Flood. Only five generations after the Flood, the earth was divided and the nations were separated and dispersed at Babel. The world once again was filled with idolatry, immorality, and strife. God looked into all of the hearts. He was looking for a man with whom He could begin a new and holy nation, one that would be separated uniquely unto Him. He wanted a holy people in whom He could entrust the holy oracles (Rom. 3:1-2), who would be a light to the whole world, and out of which would come the Saviour of the world.

God was looking for a special man out of whom he could birth this nation, a man who would cherish God's Word and instil it into his children (Gen. 18:19). God found faithful Abraham (Neh. 9:7-8).

While Abraham was a younger man and still a resident of Ur of the Chaldees, the God of glory appeared to him (Acts 7:2-3). Ur was about 140 miles southeast of the city of Babylon. It was permeated with idolatry. Joshua 24:2-3 suggests that even his father Terah served other gods there. Ur means "moon god." Abraham had been told to separate himself from his father's house, while he was yet in Ur (Gen. 12:1). His father Terah and other family members came along with him as far as Haran, and detained him from doing the will of God.

12:1 – *“Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.”* Three commands were entailed in the call: 1. Get thee out of thy country 2. From thy kindred 3. From thy father's house.

Abram wholly obeyed the first command, having left his own country of Ur of the Chaldees. The second commandment was not obeyed in that he took Lot, his brother's son, with him, even into

the land of Canaan. The third commandment was partially obeyed in that he journeyed with his father Terah until Haran where the separation took place, in all probability, because one did not have the call. Terah had no grace to journey any further into this unknown land of Canaan but was satisfied with the blessings of the land of Mesopotamia (the land between two rivers—the Tigris and the Euphrates).

The Lord continued speaking to Abram. He was to go into a land that He would show him. The account of this same event is recorded for us in Hebrews 11:8, “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.”

We may summarise God’s call by saying that certainly Abraham knew the country of his calling but that other particulars were hidden from him. In my own experience there have been times when the name of a country has been given to us, but we had to go there in faith because we did not know *where in particular* God wanted us to go. Further revelation of exactly where and what we were called to do was opened to us after we had been there for a considerable time. It was often a day-by-day walk of faith before we saw His will open up before us.

The Seven-fold Promises Made to Abram

12:2-3 – “*And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.*”

1. “*I will make of thee a great nation*” — This was fulfilled through the nation of Israel, the name given to his grandson Jacob at the river Jabbok. Also the Church is a great nation (1 Pet. 2:9).
2. “*I will bless thee*” — Certainly Abraham during his lifetime experienced material benefits, being a very rich and powerful man. He was also the recipient of the Lord’s spiritual blessings. In many instances the Lord made special appearances unto him.
3. “*I will make thy name great*” — This was fulfilled in the sense that he has received an everlasting name (Ps. 45:17).
4. “*Thou shalt be a blessing*” — Because Abraham was a recipient of God’s blessings, he in turn was able to bless many others. Abraham’s nation produced all

the apostles and prophets, and the Saviour of the world. His nation has given the world the oracles of God—the Scriptures.

5. *“I will bless them that bless thee”* — Everyone who blesses Israel is blessed. He will reward those around us according to how they have treated us.

6. *“And curse him that curseth thee”* — Anyone who curses Israel is cursed. Many times have I seen the Lord deal severely, even unto death, with those who have risen up against me. However, in my heart there has been no animosity towards them, and on certain occasions I was even ignorant of their evil intents.

7. *“In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed”* — Through the righteousness of Abraham, the friend of God, we inherit the spiritual blessings of Christ. Abraham has been a blessing to all nations for wherever Jews take up their dwelling place others are blessed through them. However, the fullness of this promise will be fulfilled in the Millennium, when the whole earth will be blessed through Israel.

The Entrance into the Land of Canaan

12:4-5 – *“So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother’s son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.”*

Abram obeyed the command of the Lord, separating from his father, Terah, and going into the land of Canaan with Lot (whom he should not have taken), and Sarai his wife. In addition, there were many other employees and slaves whom he had acquired at Haran. His time in Haran must have been a very profitable sojourn for him in the natural.

12:6 – *“And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.”* The first place that he stopped at was Sichem, which means “shoulder.” In the sense of his journey, he had now put his shoulder to the work of the ministry that the Lord had appointed for him. In reality, it is only when we enter into the place (either spiritually or naturally) that the Lord has for us that we begin to feel the burden of the task coming upon us.

Moreh, the next stop, means “teacher.” This is the ministry to which we all are called, in one degree or another. The Apostle Paul stated, “ye ought to be teachers” (Heb. 5:12). Therefore, we should seek to be teachers of righteousness ourselves and produce this characteristic in other believers.

12:7 – *“And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.”* Abram built the first altar in the land after the Lord appeared unto him in the plain of Moreh. At this time the Lord appeared unto him, and reiterated His previous promises that He would give unto Abram and his seed the land for their inheritance. One truth that must not be neglected at this point is that *our inheritance is through our seed* (whether it is a spiritual or natural seed). Therefore, we should cultivate and train our sons and daughters well.

12:8-9 – *“And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.”* The next encampment of Abram was between two places. It was between Bethel, meaning the “house of God,” and Hai or Ai, which means “a heap” or “vanity,” speaking of this world. This represents a partial consecration and divided heart. He camped between the house of God and the vanity of this world.

How often this is the case with us who call ourselves Christians. We are following God, yet the world still draws us with all its vanities. In spite of that, Abram’s heart was poised toward God and he built another altar unto the Lord. A half-hearted consecration will lead to *vulnerability* in the next trial, as we now see was the case with Abram.

The Descent into Egypt

12:10 – *“And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.”* In considering Abram’s journey into Egypt because of the famine, there are several lessons to be gained. Although Egypt was well favoured materially at certain times in its history, it was not blessed spiritually. Therefore, receiving material blessings is not an indicator of our spiritual well being.

12:11-20 – *“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of*

Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had."

Abram, with an incomplete consecration, was concerned over his fate at the hands of the Egyptians because of the beauty of Sarai, who was now some 65 years of age. It is extraordinary that Sarai retained her beauty at such an age. As we shall see later, there was a miraculous restoration of youth given to her at the age of 90 in order to bring forth Isaac.

In those days, when a man had a beautiful wife, often the husband would be killed and the woman taken. Therefore, Abram entreated Sarai to say that she was his sister. This was a partial truth, since she was the daughter of his father but did not have the same mother. Pharaoh took her into his house upon the recommendation of his servants, but God plagued Pharaoh to protect Sarai so that He had a godly issue from the patriarch. The plaguing of Pharaoh and the Egyptians foreshadowed what God would do several hundred years later when Moses issued the ten plagues.

Pharaoh then reproved Abram for his deceit, but the father of nations offered no recorded response. However, because of his stature and undoubtedly the impact of a divine intervention on his behalf, he was escorted out of Egypt with due honours.

This trip into Egypt teaches us several things. Egypt (which represents the world) is not the place to go to for help when we are in trouble. In this case, however, God had a reason for Abraham's going to Egypt, as we shall later see. Many times God warned his people not to return to Egypt for help (Isa. 30:1-3, Jer. 42:13-18). Abram's lack of consecration induced him to fear for his life, and led him to deceit. Also, it is quite probable that Abram got Hagar the Egyptian while he was there. The acquisition of Hagar led to many other problems later in his life.

The Return unto the Promised Land

13:1-4 – *"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold. And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning,*

between Bethel and Hai; Unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD.”

Often when we have failed and gone astray, the Lord returns us to the place where we departed from His pathway. Thus, Abram was brought back to the place of the altar between Bethel and Ai, where he called upon the Lord. Abram did not become the “father of faith” immediately upon answering God’s call. He became the father of faith and the friend of God through years of testing and proving.

The Separation from Lot

13:5-13 – *“And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left. And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. Abram dwelled in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom. But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the LORD exceedingly.”*

The separation between Abraham (the one who had the call of God) and Lot (who was but a fellow traveller), was achieved through property. Both uncle and nephew had great possessions, and the land could not nourish them both. Consequently, there was strife between their servants. Abram, the one with the call, could afford to be generous. He allowed Lot to pick whatever land he wanted.

Men who have the call and promises of God possess great inner strength. They never cling to their possessions or worry about them being taken away by others, but rather hold them loosely. Men and women with the promises of God know that ultimately they will have what God has pronounced. Those *without* the promises are the ones who will fight for and cling to possessions, or positions.

Lot, led by his carnal desires, saw the fertile land of the plain of Sodom and Gomorrah and opted to dwell there. Regretfully, it would cost him his all. Using his natural eyes, he saw that the land was very beautiful and well watered, even as the Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, Sodom and Gomorrah

were ripe for judgment soon, and that is exactly where Lot was choosing to live. Lot was making the same mistake as mother Eve. He was making a major decision with his natural eyes. Let us enquire of God diligently for His mind and direction in everything we do!

The Lord's Further Promise to Abram

13:14-16 – *“And the LORD said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.”*

The separation from Lot was another step of obedience in the life of Abram. He had already been commanded to separate from his father's house and kin. After Abram's separation from Lot, the Lord spoke afresh to him. God not only reconfirms the fact that the land will belong to Abram and his seed, but also that his seed will be as the dust of the earth so that no man can number them. Of course, this would be fulfilled in and through the children of Israel.

13:17-18 – *“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD.”* God gave Abram a command that is very important to understand. He was told to walk literally throughout the land. This is a spiritual principle that is repeated in Joshua 1:3, “Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses.”

My wife and I have often been required by the Lord to go to many countries in years past. Our feet have literally walked on many lands around the world, and seemingly there was very little accomplished at that time. However, as the years have passed, we have found that our spiritual children have inhabited these places as missionaries, pastors, and teachers.

Then Abram moved to Mamre, which was in Hebron. This symbolised being settled and having firmness of purpose. His vacillating was now over, and he built his third altar here.

The First Scripturally Recorded War

14:1-16 – *“And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; That these made war with Bera king of*

Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim, And the Horites in their mount Seir, unto Elparan, which is by the wilderness. And they returned, and came to Enmishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezontamar. And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; With Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five. And the vale of Siddim was full of slimepits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram. And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people."

Right from the days of the Patriarch Abram, the kings of the lands of Shinar (Babylon) and Elam (Persia) raided the pleasant land given to the chosen race. The neighbouring lands were in subjection to them for 12 years (12 speaks of government), and then in the thirteenth year they rebelled against them. According to the law of first mention, the number 13 speaks of *rebellion*. In the fourteenth year they made war; and Lot, who was dwelling in Sodom, was captured. Abram alerted to the capture of his nephew, then resorted to his own army of 318 men. The number 318 symbolises the strength that a separated walk gives (300 + 18 See page 71 for details).

These 318 servants were “born” and trained in his own house, speaking again of the fact that we should train our people for spiritual warfare. The spiritual children who are *born and raised* by us will be loyal, and we can rely upon them in times of need. Those not born and raised by us have the seeds and concepts of others growing in their hearts, and often they are not faithful to us. The Apostle Paul said he did not want to build upon another man's foundation (Rom. 15:20).

The Return from Battle Abram Meets Melchisedec

14:17-18 – *“And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer, and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king’s dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God.”*

Abram rescued Lot and retrieved all. After returning from the slaughter of the enemy, which had considerably outnumbered his small force, a very notable king came out to meet him. His name was Melchisedec. He is mentioned but three times in Scripture, yet the truths concerning him have a great impact upon the lives of God’s people.

Melchisedec is a type of the New Testament priesthood of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest. Saint Paul opens up the importance of the life of Melchisedec in Hebrews chapters 5-7. In Hebrews 7:1-3, Paul states that Melchisedec was not only a priest, but he was also the king of Jerusalem, the location of Mount Zion. Jerusalem means “peace;” therefore, he was “the king of peace.” By interpretation, Melchisedec means “king of righteousness.” Therefore he was the king of righteousness and the king of peace. Thus, he is a type of the Lord Jesus Himself. He was both king and priest *by election*, not genealogy.

We, too, are elected and do not receive salvation or become a king or priest through the merits of our parents or lineage. Our call is by an individual act of grace bestowed upon us by the Heavenly Father. In Revelation 1:6 and 5:10, it is clear that we are called to become kings and priests unto God. This was not possible under the old covenant.

Under the old covenant, only those from the tribe of Judah could be kings, and only those from the tribe of Levi could be priests. King David’s prophecy in Psalm 110:4 foretold the coming of the new covenant and the Messenger of the new covenant, saying, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.” The coming of a priest after Melchisedec’s order signified a different priesthood and a whole new covenant that functioned under different laws.

The bread and wine that Melchisedec brought forth was symbolic of the first communion service, foreshadowing the coming Christ as the Bread of Life and His blood that was shed for our sins.

14:19-20 – *“And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy*

hand. And he gave him tithes of all.” Melchisedec also blessed Abram. The Apostle Paul deduces that Melchisedec also blessed Levi, who was in the loins of Abram. Levi was the progenitor of the Old Testament priesthood.

Paul was saying that the lesser (or inferior) priesthood of Levi, who was in the loins of Abraham, was being blessed by the greater priesthood (Melchisedec). Also, when Abraham paid Melchisedec tithes, Levi also was paying tithes to a superior priesthood (Heb. 7:4-7).

14:21-24 – “*And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself. And Abram said to the king of Sodom, I have lift up mine hand unto the LORD, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich: Save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men which went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.*”

In closing this chapter may we mention Abram’s refusal to receive recompense from the ungodly king of Sodom, *lest he would say that he had made Abram rich*. Let us be careful from whom we accept help. Outsiders often give money with ulterior motives. They want to control us, or the work of God, or claim that they are the source of our blessings, instead of God.

Abram’s Vision from the Lord

15:1 – “*After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*” The promise that the Lord now makes to Abram is exceedingly precious. God tells him that He Himself will be his shield and his defence against all his enemies. Who can overcome God? Then in spite of the fact that Abram was very rich, his real reward will be the person and friendship of the Lord Himself. There is no greater reward or privilege in this life or in eternity than to have the Lord as our prize, or as Paul says, “to win Christ” (Phil. 3:8).

15:2-4 – “*And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.*”

Because Abram had no natural seed of his own, the heir to all of Abram’s possessions was his faithful servant Eliezer of Damascus, who was born in his house. Yet we see the Lord gave another very precious promise to Abram, declaring that his heir would not be Eliezer but one from his own loins.

Even though Abram and Sarai were past the time of childbearing at this point in their lives, their heir would be Isaac.

15:5 – *“And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”* Then the Lord took Abram out and showed him the sky. God proclaimed to a childless man that he would have more descendants than could be counted. We see then the test to which the faith of Abram was subjected.

Previously, in Genesis 13:16, the Lord had promised seed that would be as “the dust of the earth.” In this verse, Abram was promised seed that would be as the stars of heaven. Therefore, two seeds were promised—a natural seed (dust of the earth—the Jews, through Isaac), and a spiritual seed (stars of heaven that came through Christ).

15:6 – *“And he believed in the Lord; and [the Lord] counted it to him for righteousness.”* The action of faith on the part of Abram, attributing to God that which is humanly impossible, was counted to him for righteousness. This statement is used by the Apostle Paul to delineate the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ (Rom. 4:3, Gal. 3:6). Abraham believed God’s message, and because of his heart response to the truth, God counted him righteous. In the same way, when men and women believe the message of the gospel, they are counted righteous also. Righteousness involves a heart attitude, *a wholehearted affirmative response* to God’s message (Acts 8:36-37). The reason we cannot be saved by works is that men can do works without any change of heart.

The Covenant of the Inheritance of the Land

15:7-8 – *“And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And [Abram] said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?”* Here the Lord repeats his promise to give Abraham all the land of Canaan, and Abram asks God for assurance and confirmation. Therefore, God makes a covenant with him.

15:9-10 – *“And he said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not.”* In those times, the sealing of a covenant between two parties was concluded by both parties of the covenant walking between the divided carcasses of animals. Thus Abraham was instructed to take the following:

1. A heifer of three years old, which is the offering for purification of sin
2. A she goat of three years, which is the sacrifice for the sin of ignorance
3. The ram of three years, which is the sacrifice for consecration
4. A turtle dove and a pigeon, which are the free will voluntary offering of the poor to express their love and devotion to the Lord

Abram took these animals and clave them into two parts, laying one part on the right side, and the other part on the left side. The birds were not divided. The turtledove was on one side, and the pigeon was on the other side. Both God and Abram were to walk together through this pathway of divided sacrifices, thus sealing the covenant.

The Defense of the Sacrifice

15:11 – *“And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away.”* Then the fowls of prey tried to devour the sacrifice, and Abram drove them away. When we have made a commitment to the Lord, then the fowls (or evil spirits, emissaries of Satan) try to destroy and spoil that which we have devoted to God. Psalm 118:27 commands us to bind the sacrifice unto the altar with cords. It is so easy to take back from the altar what we have placed there, or for “the fowls of the air” to devour and ruin our sacrifice. In Matthew 13:4 and 19, “the fowls of the air” represent Satan and evil spirits. These try to steal the sown Word out of the hearts of men.

The Horror of Great Darkness

15:12 – *“And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.”* Sometime in your Christian walk you will experience the horror of great darkness. In my own life, I have had this experience. What is its purpose? When God meets you and speaks to you and gives you special promises, so often He will pass you through this experience so that you will realise how helpless you are, and how impossible it is on your part to fulfil the promises He has made to you. It is a terrible sense of hopelessness and loneliness, and you feel enveloped with darkness (Isa. 50:10). This is precisely what He did in the life of Abram.

The Sealing of the Covenant

15:13-16 – *“And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great*

substance. And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full."

This is a remarkable revelation. The Lord declared to Abram that his seed (the children of Israel) would go down into a strange land (Egypt) and be enslaved there for several hundred years. Afterwards God would judge Egypt (with the ten plagues through Moses), and they would leave that country of death with great wealth.

Then there follows a promise that in the fourth generation they would come back again (to the land of promise). Altogether, Abram's seed remained in Egypt four generations. Then they made their departure. Moses was born in the fourth generation in Egypt. His forefather, Levi (one of the 12 sons of Jacob), came to sojourn in Egypt. Levi begat Kohath, Kohath begat Amram, and Amram begat Moses. Thus, that nation of Hebrews came out of the land of servitude in the fourth generation.

"For the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." The Amorites were one of the enemy tribes who inhabited the land of Canaan. God had a set time for their judgment and destruction, for when Israel came over Jordan to possess the land many of the Amorites were destroyed. God waited for their iniquity to be full before He judged them.

15:17-18 – *"And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces. In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates."* Now the parties of the covenant, who should have passed between the divided sacrifices and sealed it, should have been God and Abram, but Abram was in a deep sleep.

The smoking furnace is a symbol of God the Father. Hebrews 12:29 says, "Our God is a consuming fire." The burning lamp is representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Who passed between those divided sacrifices? It was none other than God the Father and God the Son. These two made an immutable covenant between themselves to give the land of Canaan to Abram and his seed forever. Therefore, this covenant can never be broken. It was not a covenant between God and man, but between the Father and Son.

Therefore, the covenant that is to give the Land of Promise (that lies between the two great rivers from the river of Egypt, the Nile, to the great river Euphrates) is not dependent upon any action of the seed of Abram. This covenant is dependent upon the pre-determinate will of the Father and of the Son.

15:19-21 – *“The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”* The ten nations mentioned (Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaims, Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites, Jebusites) allude to the fact that they represent those nations that did not keep the commandments of God, and therefore are given into the hand of the obedient seed of Abram.

The Birth of Ishmael

Sarai was one of the seven barren women in Scripture. However, Sarai, seeing that she was now long past the age of childbearing (being some 75 years old) and knowing that Abram had received the promises of a seed from the Lord, seeks to bring to pass the promise through human instigation. Abram is known as the “Father of Faith,” yet his faith had to be purified and perfected over a long period of time. Not everything Abram did in his earlier years was born of faith. Sometimes he acted on presumption. Our faith must be purified of human ideas and emotion (1 Pet. 1:7, Jas. 1:3).

When the Lord promised that Abram would have a son who issued from his own loins, He did not at that time specify that the mother would be Sarai. The reason for this, we suggest, is that the Lord desired that Abram and Sarai be tested, and that a lesson be given to all future generations concerning the consequences that ensue *when man takes matters into his own hands*.

This was only one act of indiscretion, but the fruit that followed was phenomenal. When you try to assist God, you can produce an “Ishmael” that will be around forever. Therefore, we must be careful what we do, even in sincerity. We will have to reckon with it until the end of time. Ishmael was the result; and he, in turn, had 12 sons who are basically the Moslem nations today. Out of this one act of fleshly impatience and the natural mind, millions of souls inhabit the Middle East today, most of which are ardent enemies of Israel.

16:1-3 – *“Now Sarai Abram’s wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.”*

Abram still had no seed, and both he and his wife Sarai were growing older. Yet, God continued to promise them a multitude of descendants (Gen. 12:1-2, 12:7, 13:15-16, 15:13, 15:18). They had

already dwelt 10 years in the land of Canaan, and Sarai and Abram became impatient. One day Sarah suggested that Abram take Hagar to try to obtain children by her. Abram hearkened to his wife, and Hagar conceived and bore Ishmael.

Thus, Ishmael was the product of *impatience* and *the natural mind*. Abraham and Sarah had tried to bring God's promise to pass through their own thinking and their own efforts. Hagar and her offspring represent the old covenant, and also the idea of trying to fulfil God's purposes with one's own efforts and works (Gal. 4:21-31). The doctrinal truths that are associated with Hagar and Ishmael are discussed fully in the life of Isaac.

16:4-6 – *“And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee. But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.”*

We now have to turn our attention to the attitude of Hagar towards Sarai, which was one of contempt. This provoked Sarai, in turn, to blame Abram, who then gave Sarai permission to treat Hagar as she wished. This seems to us, who are living under the new covenant of grace, a very unchristian way to address the problem. Nonetheless, Sarai treated Hagar harshly so that the pregnant woman fled from her mistress into the desert for refuge.

16:7-9 – *“And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur. And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands.”*

The angel of the Lord found her in the desert to which she had fled, and required her to return to Sarai and to be submissive to her. This seems the only right way—because, in every situation that we too may have to face, we cannot run from adversity, and certainly this was of Hagar's own making through the contempt she showed toward Sarai. In every situation we are required to triumph by calling upon the grace of God.

16:10-11 – *“And the angel of the LORD said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy affliction.”* As we have mentioned, the son which Hagar bore to Abram was named

Ishmael by the angel. Ishmael means “God shall hear.” Out of Ishmael has descended the people which form the Moslem nations. Today, God is hearing Ishmael’s cry. He is visiting many of them with salvation.

16:12-16 – *“And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren. And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beerlahairoi; behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered. And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son’s name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram.”*

God knows our hearts and what every one of us will do in life, even before we are born. Here we have the angel of the Lord describing the character of Ishmael. This suggests that Ishmael and his seed would be a like a wild donkey—rash, bold, untamed, uncivilised, living at large, and without restraint. There is also the suggestion that he would live in strife and in a state of war.

Another very interesting consequence of Ishmael’s being a descendant of Abram is the fact that those in Ishmael’s line were blessed because of Abram. However, Ishmael’s descendants did not enter into the Abrahamic covenant because all the promises of God descended through Isaac, not Ishmael. Genesis 17:20-21 clearly brings this out, *“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.”* Abraham was 86 years old when Ishmael was born, and 100 when Isaac was born.

Circumcision—The Token of the Covenant

17:1-8 – *“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,*

the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”

In chapter 12 and 13, God had made *promises* to Abraham. In chapter 15, He made a *covenant* with him. Now God is reaffirming the covenant with Abram, sealing it by changing his name from Abram to Abraham, and requiring circumcision for *a token* of the covenant (Gen. 17:11). Abram, meaning “father of heights” is now changed to Abraham, “the father of a multitude.” Nations and kings were to come out of Abraham; and this was an everlasting covenant that the Lord made with Abraham so that it continues throughout all generations. In chapter 22, the covenant was further affirmed by *an oath* from heaven.

No Inheritance Without Circumcision

17:9-14 – *“And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant.”*

Under the terms of the covenant, the land of Canaan was given to Abraham and his seed forever. Circumcision was the token of the covenant. This was man’s part. It had to be observed by all the seed of Abraham. Without circumcision, a Hebrew could not inherit the land or the promises. This is the reason Joshua circumcised all the people at the crossing of Jordan when they were going into the land of promise (Josh. 5:1-9). God also had to rebuke Moses for not circumcising his son, when he went to Egypt to bring the people into the land of Canaan (Ex. 4:19-26). Moses was denying his own message by not circumcising his son.

We would like to pause here to make several interesting observations concerning the doctrine of circumcision. In the natural, circumcision is the cutting away of the flesh we are born with. Spiritual circumcision is likened in the Word of God to the cutting away of the foreskin of our heart. It is the taking away of the hardness of our hearts that we may love Him (Deut. 30:6). If we resist the Sword of God, we will not enter into the promises of God. Many of God’s people today are uncircumcised in heart.

In Genesis 17:6, we have the thought of *multiplication*, which is dependent upon circumcision. Obviously, the Lord does not wish to multiply those who are uncircumcised, since in so doing it would multiply all our problems in the lives of others too.

Spiritual Meanings of Circumcision

Evidence of a circumcised heart:

1. Not a seeker of man's praise (Rom. 2:28-29)
2. Not stubborn or resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51)
3. Genuine worship in spirit and in truth (Phil. 3:3)
4. No confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3-5)
5. Humility, ability to say "I am wrong" (Lev. 26:40-42; Deut. 10:16)
6. Ability to love the Lord and keep His commandments (Deut. 30:6,8)
7. Loyalty to the Lord and to our spouse (Jer. 4:4, 3:14, 3:20)
8. A clean tongue (Ex. 6:12,30)

Many other evidences may be added to this list. Jesus is a minister of spiritual circumcision. His words cut away evil and change hearts so that we can inherit the promises (Rom. 15:8). Only a changed, transformed heart can inherit the promises.

The Promise of a Son Through Sarai

17:15-17 – *“And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?”* After the episode with Hagar, God now is specific about Sarai bringing forth the promised seed.

The promise of a son through Sarai first involved a change of name from Sarai, meaning “dominant,” to Sarah, meaning “princess or submissive one.” A change of name signifies a change of character. Certainly a change of character was necessary since Sarah, as she was now called, was to become the mother of the Messianic line. She would become the mother of nations.

Indeed, as the Apostle Paul said in Galatians 4:24-31, Sarah is a type of the Heavenly Jerusalem, who is the mother of us all. It is of the utmost importance that *both* parents meet the Lord in a special way before they have children. I have seen the importance of this in my own life. The

spiritual children whom I have had later on in life are of far finer quality than those I brought to birth in my earlier years.

17:18-19 – *“And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.”*

Whilst Abraham pleads for Ishmael, the Lord counters with the promise that this new son by Sarah will be named “Isaac” meaning “laughter.” Some scholars have suggested that Isaac represents the laugh of faith. Oh, that we too might know the joyous laugh of faith *in response* to the Lord’s promises in our own lives, and certainly when the promises are realised.

17:20-22 – *“And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.”*

God promised to bless Ishmael and multiply him greatly. Twelve princes would come from him, although the covenant of the land of Canaan and all the spiritual promises would be established through Isaac, and his seed after him. Isaac later became the father of Jacob who had 12 sons. The 12 sons of Jacob became the 12 tribes of Israel.

17:23-27 – *“And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham’s house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And all the men of his house, born in the house, and bought with money of the stranger, were circumcised with him.”* The entire household of Abraham was circumcised. He was 99 years old; and when he was 100, Isaac would be born.

As we have often stated, numbers have significance. Thirteen is the number of rebellion; associated with Ishmael, it forebodes the nature of Ishmael and his seed. They were, are, and will always rebel as a people against God. Ishmael’s descendants have embraced Islam, which denies the deity of Christ.

Yet because Ishmael along with the strangers, were still under the covering of Abraham, they submitted to circumcision. This illustrates another truth. Spiritual experiences do not guarantee lasting benefits unless we walk in the light of them. Saul was given another heart. 1 Samuel 10:9 says, “And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.” Sadly, Saul disobeyed God and, in the end, he was rejected by God.

The Affirmation of the Promise to Sarah

18:1-15 – *“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.”*

The Lord and two of His angels appeared unto Abraham in the plains of Mamre. Christ said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and was glad (Jn. 8:56-59). The appearance of the Lord to Abraham, Moses, David, and all of the prophets was none other than the pre-incarnate Christ.

After entertaining the three guests courteously in the manner of the Middle East during those times, the Lord reaffirmed His promise to Abraham of a son to Sarah. Sarah’s response was one of laughter within herself, but it was the laughter of unbelief. However, the Lord heard her heart and He asked, “Is

any thing too hard for the Lord?" This is a question that we must also ask ourselves when God makes extraordinary promises to us (which seem quite impossible in the natural). It is the same reply that the prophet Jeremiah gave when God spoke to him while he was in the hold of the king's prison in Jerusalem and the Babylonian army was besieging the holy city (Jer. 32:17). "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee."

The Intercession for Sodom and Gomorrah

18:16-19 – *“And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”*

God was about to judge Sodom and Gomorrah. The Lord did not hide any of His secrets from Abraham because Abraham was His close friend (2 Chr. 20:7, Isa. 41:8, Jas. 2:23). God knew Abraham, and trusted him. He knew that Abraham would command his children to walk in the way of the Lord so that God could bring all His promises to pass.

18:20-33 – *“And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous; I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? That be far from thee to do after this manner; to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? And the LORD said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes. And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: Peradventure there shall lack five of the fifty righteous: wilt thou destroy all the city for lack of five? And he said, If I find there forty and five, I will not destroy it. And he spake unto him yet again, and said, Peradventure there shall be forty found there. And he said, I will not do it for forty's sake. And he said unto him, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Peradventure there shall thirty be found there. And he said, I will not do it, if I find thirty there. And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be*

twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the LORD went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place."

The Lord revealed to Abraham His intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, whereupon Abraham pleaded for the righteous in that city. Intercession is different from prayer. Prayer is petitioning the Lord. Intercession is to ask according to the will of God (Rom. 8:26-27). Therefore, intercession is predicated upon a close communion and union with the Lord, and knowing His mind. Abraham, the friend of the Lord, was accorded this honour, which also was determined by two other factors:

1. The Lord saw that Abraham was going to faithfully fulfil his ministry. The Apostle Paul admonished Archippus (Col. 4:17) to take heed to fulfil the ministry which he had received from the Lord. We, too, must fulfil the work that the Lord has appointed for us to do upon this earth. God will only entrust His secrets to those who are faithful.

2. The Lord knew that Abraham would raise his children in the fear of the Lord and that they would keep the commandments of the Lord. If we want God's blessing, we have to diligently train our children. Avoid yelling or screaming at your children, arguing with them, or being demanding toward them. In love, quietly command them, and discipline them if they do not obey. Not only must we be faithful to our ministry, but we must also be faithful to raise our household to walk in the ways of the Lord.

Certainly Abraham was concerned about the welfare of his nephew Lot, and his family. Sadly, God could not find 10 righteous people in that city. Sodom and its neighbouring cities were totally given over to homosexuality. Jude 1:7 states that Sodom and Gomorrah were set forth as an example of those who suffer the vengeance of eternal fire. Eternal judgment is awesome; it is the fate of unrepentant Christians (1 Cor. 6:9-10, Eph. 5:3-8, 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

The Destruction of Sodom

19:1-29 – *"And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they lay down,*

the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them. And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof. And they said, Stand back. And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee, than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door. But the men put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the LORD being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do any thing till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the LORD rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the LORD: And he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt.”

The sins of Sodom are enumerated for us in Ezekiel 16:49-50: pride; fullness of bread; abundance of idleness; not strengthening the poor and needy; being haughty; and committing perverse sexual acts, which bare her name—“sodomy.”

Lot was saved because of the intercession of Abraham. The angels who were sent to destroy Sodom first found Lot and brought him and his family out of the city. Lot was extremely reluctant to leave Sodom in spite of the fact that he knew that this city was very wicked, and that angels had been sent to tell him about Sodom’s imminent destruction.

It is noteworthy that his two daughters had married men of Sodom, and these men perished in the destruction of the city. Lot’s compromise of dwelling in Sodom ruined the morals of his daughters.

Lot’s wife was also enamoured with the wicked city of Sodom. She was turned into a pillar of salt because she looked back, in spite of being warned by the angel not to do so. She looked back with a longing in her heart to be there again. *Salt* speaks of a land that can bring forth no fruit. The wife of Lot is a type of those who are unfruitful. I once knew a young girl who had a dream concerning the Second Coming of the Lord. In her dream, she was being raptured with many other believers. However, she looked down and, as she did, she then started to go down towards the earth.

The Lord Himself, when teaching on His Second Coming, gives us a solemn warning to *remember Lot’s wife* (Lk. 17:28-32). Therefore, let us have our hearts purified of the desires of this world, lest our fate be as hers.

Lot’s Two Daughters The Beginning of Moab and Ammon

19:30-38 – *“And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters. And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the firstborn bare a son,*

and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.”

Because of a wrong choice many years prior to this event, (when he sought to dwell amongst the wicked because of the fertile land—Gen. 13:10-13), Lot lost everything. He lost all his possessions, his wife, including the morals of his daughters. Furthermore, he became, through incest with his two daughters, the father of *Moab and Ammon*, two nations that have plagued Israel to this very day. They are now incorporated in the Kingdom of Jordan.

2 Peter 2:6-9 reveals that Lot was *a righteous man* who was vexed from day to day with the deeds he saw and heard in Sodom. Nonetheless, he had chosen to dwell there. Although he did not practice many of the ways of Sodom, he became comfortable dwelling there, ruining his family and dulling his spiritual perception. Lot was righteous as he was a true believer, but certainly he was not holy. Many believers are righteous and have a certain sense of right and wrong, but they are not holy because they cherish other loves and idols in their hearts, even as did Lot (2 Ki. 15:3-4). Lot made it to heaven but has little fruit to show, and he has to account for having a corrupted family.

Abraham and Abimelech

20:1-18 – *“And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur; and sojourned in Gerar. And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah. But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife’s sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of*

my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show unto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reprov'd. So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife."

Abraham travelled together with Sarah into the land of the Philistines. He was about to repeat the mistake that he made in Genesis 12:11-20. Once again he asked Sarah to say that she was his sister so that he would not lose his life if the men of that country desired her. This "father of faith" still had not been made perfect in faith.

When we consider that Sarah was now 90 years of age, it is evident that a renewal of youth had been granted to both Abraham and Sarah so that they might have the son of promise, Isaac. This was in conformity with Psalm 103:5 which says, "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

Moses also experienced this renewal of youth, "And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated" (Deut. 34:7).

In a vision that the author of these notes has had, he saw that in the last days of the Church Age the saints are filled with and radiate the glory of God, and are so very youthful.

God reprov'd Abimelech in a dream, causing Abimelech to plead his innocence, saying that he had done everything *in the integrity of his heart*. This is an important revelation to us. God withholds a man or woman from sinning when they have set their heart in the direction of righteousness. The man who pleases God shall escape the clutches of immorality, but the one who does not fear the Lord is not protected by God, and falls (Eccl. 7:26).

The fact that Sarah was reprov'd by Abimelech suggests that in her new-found youth she did not mind attracting the attention of the men.

In these verses, we also have a record of the first healings in the Word of God. When Abraham prayed, God healed all the people in Gerar of barrenness.

The Birth of Isaac

21:1-8 – *“And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age. And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned.”*

Within a year (Gen. 17:19, 21; 18:10) the promised seed arrived. Abraham was 100 (the number of fullness) years old. Through faith, both parents had received a marvellous miracle in their bodies to conceive (Rom. 4:17-22, Heb. 11:11-12).

The name of the son born to Abraham and Sarah, previously named by the Lord Himself, was *Isaac*, which means “laughter.” Sarah declared: “God hath made me to laugh.” This is the laughter we will experience when God brings to pass the impossible in our lives. This should be read in conjunction with Psalm 126:1-2, “When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.” Release from Babylon was so marvellous it seemed more like a dream than reality. Here the restored exiles rejoiced in the Lord’s deliverance.

Ishmael Mocks and Is Cast Out

21:9-11 – *“And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham’s sight because of his son.”*

Ishmael was seen *mocking* at the feast given by Abraham when Isaac was weaned. (The carnal always mock the spiritual.) Upon this occasion Sarah demanded that Hagar and her son Ishmael be cast out so that they would not be co-inheritors of the blessings that the Lord had promised Abraham, through Isaac. At first, the matter seemed grievous to father Abraham.

21:12-21 – *“And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in*

Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away: and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba. And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs. And she went, and sat her down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lift up her voice, and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad; and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt.”

The Lord graciously intervened and comforted Abraham by promising that He would make Ishmael into a great nation because he was also the seed of Abraham. In the desert Hagar was met by the angel who encouraged her. When Ishmael grew into manhood, Hagar took an Egyptian wife for him. Hagar herself was an Egyptian.

This event is very meaningful, for the inclination of people is always to return to their roots if they are not truly flowing in the command given by the Lord to His chosen ones. Thus, we should take Psalm 45:10-11 to heart, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; *forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house*; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.”

Having been cast out, the seed of Ishmael have always sensed rejection even unto this present day.

Abraham Dwells at Beersheba

21:22-34 – *“And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Phichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: Now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son’s son: but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham reproveth Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech’s servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing: neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but to day. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of*

them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me, that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them. Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines. And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the LORD, the everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days."

After all of this Abraham made an oath of peace with the Philistines and dwelt at Beersheba. Beersheba means "the well of the oath." Abraham had dug a well there, but the Philistines had taken it away with violence. Spiritually, the Philistines speak of envy and jealousy (Gen. 26:14-16). Abraham and Abimelech made an oath of peace by the well. They promised to show kindness to each other, and to remember that the well belonged to Abraham. Abraham remained at Beersheba for a considerable time.

The Offering of Isaac

22:1-14 – *"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught*

in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen.”

Now Abraham faced the test of all tests. This account of the offering of Isaac by Abraham, which the Lord commanded him to do, is a spiritual truth of the utmost importance for us all.

All of the promises of God made to Abraham were contained in Isaac. All that he had sacrificed in obeying the Lord and leaving his father, family, and home in the Ur of the Chaldees had been for this very purpose, that he and his seed might receive an inheritance in the land of Canaan. Now he was being asked to lay it all upon the altar, to give it all back to God.

We must be pliable in the hands of God. If He tells us to go one way and later He tells us to turn around to go another way, we must be willing to do it without a lot of questions. Abraham did not argue with God about the reason for reversing his direction.

The test was to see what was first in the life of Abraham—God or His blessings. I have known many Christians who have had calls to foreign lands and have had very successful ministries there. Then the Lord has asked them to lay down their call and return to their homeland.

As I write, I am reminded of a dear Danish missionary lady who was a governess in our work in Switzerland many years ago. She had ministered extensively in West Africa, and her sole desire was to return there, the land of her adoption. However, one day in prayer, the Lord asked her to lay down her call. This, after much weeping, she was able to do. *Joyfully* she looked forward to staying in Europe for the rest of her life. Yet several years later the Lord most graciously permitted her to return to Africa. She died in the land of her adoption amongst her spiritual children who loved her so much.

Beloved let us, like Abraham, hold very loosely to the things of this world, and *even to the promises and call of God*. In so doing, we allow Him to be the Pre-eminent One in our lives, and His will takes priority even over His blessings. Many men and women have been destroyed because they could not lay down their Isaac, what was dearest to their heart.

Abraham did not act as though he were going to a funeral when he took Isaac to Mount Moriah. When the reaction is anger and bitterness, or the attitude of sorrow without comfort, there is something greatly out of perspective in one's heart and mind. Abraham offered Isaac *in faith and in worship*. Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:17-19).

While this was indeed the test to which the Lord subjected Abraham, there is also a beautiful picture of *the submission of Isaac* in this trial. Note the holy acquiescence of Isaac to being bound by his father, his wholehearted obedience in accepting this indignity. Furthermore, without murmur or complaint, he lay upon the altar and must have seen the knife poised in the air above him in the hand of his beloved father. Submission and meekness are, in fact, the two most notable virtues of Isaac.

The Covenant Confirmed by an Oath

22:15-19 – *“And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. So Abraham returned unto his young men, and they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.”*

God had *promised* Abraham that he and his seed would be a blessing to the whole earth. Then He confirmed those promises with *a covenant* (Gen. 15). The promise of securing Canaan land also involved a seed in that land. After Abraham was willing to lay down all the promises by offering up his only seed Isaac, the Lord reconfirmed the covenant to him by shouting *an oath* from heaven, and declaring that in Abraham all the nations would be blessed (Heb. 6:13-18). This is fulfilled through the gospel of Christ.

Let us look at Abraham’s seed from three points of view: his seed is Christ Himself (Gal. 3:16); his seed are believers in Christ (Gal. 3:19); his seed are his physical descendants (the Hebrews).

All the apostles and prophets came from Abraham, which means all the Scriptures (oracles of God) came from the Hebrews (Rom. 3:1-2). Through Abraham’s seed all the earth is blessed. There are many men in the Bible who are types of the coming Christ, but perhaps Abraham is the only clear type of God the Father. He was willing to sacrifice his son, his only beloved son.

The Seed of Nahor

22:20-24 – *“And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she hath also born children unto thy brother Nahor; Huz his firstborn, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram, And Chesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.*

And Bethuel begat Rebekah: these eight Milcah did bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bare also Tebah, and Gaham, and Thahash, and Maachah."

This genealogy is given to legitimise the lineage of Rebekah, who was to become the bride of Isaac. Nahor was Abraham's brother. Abraham's other brother, Haran, had died many years before, when he was still a resident in Ur of the Chaldees. Nahor had eight children by Milcah. Also he had four children by a concubine named Reumah. One of Nahor's children by Milcah was *Bethuel*. Bethuel was the father of Rebekah.

The Death of Sarah

23:1-20 – *"And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her. And Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and entreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, That he may give me the cave of Machpelah, which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure Unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of*

Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city. And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre: the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth.”

The purpose of this account of the death of Sarah is to establish the rights of Abraham to Hebron. Abraham purchased a piece of land in Hebron for 400 shekels of silver, and there he buried Sarah. Thus, Sarah died and was buried in Hebron. Hebron was later the place of the second and third anointings that King David received when he was first acknowledged as king over Judah, and then later, king over the whole of Israel. Hebron has much special significance. Caleb received Hebron for an inheritance because he wholly followed the Lord (Josh. 14:13-14).

King David later moved his capital from Hebron to Zion, which is in Jerusalem. In David’s time, Hebron degenerated into a place of betrayal. *Zion* was the final resting place of the Ark of the Covenant, and it was the end of the journey of Israel from Egypt. It became the most holy place in the whole land of Israel. Hebron is never once mentioned in the New Testament, but Zion is mentioned as the apex of spirituality for it is the very habitation of the throne of God (Rev. 14:1-5, Heb. 12:22-24).

Sarah was 127 years old at her death. She was 90 when she gave birth to Isaac, making Isaac 37 or 38 when his mother died. Now it was time for Isaac to find a bride.

The Choosing of the Bride for Isaac

24:1-9 – *“And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and the LORD had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the LORD, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father’s house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.”*

In olden times, as it is today in many third world countries, it was customary for the parents to arrange the marriages for their children. Thus, Abraham had a special mission for his servant Eliezer. (Eliezer was from Damascus, which was established shortly after the Flood, and is the oldest city on earth today.) Abraham made his beloved servant Eliezer promise him that he would not allow Isaac to marry a Canaanite girl. He wanted Eliezer to go up to the country of his family, to Haran, to pick someone of his own kin so that the lineage would be preserved.

The principal truth in this passage of Scripture that the Lord, through Abraham, reveals is the importance of choosing the right wife or husband for our children. They must not only be of the same faith but they must also have the same vision, purpose, and call. Truly, marriage is ordained in heaven.

As Christians, we should pray earnestly and ask the Lord to reveal the one whom He has chosen as a life partner for our children. The Lord is seeking a godly seed. We should marry someone of our own spiritual family. Not only should you marry someone who is saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit, but also one who has the same call and purpose.

The Sign of God's Choice

24:10-12 – *“And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham.”*

Eliezer departed for the city of Nahor, which is *Haran*. God arranged that it would be evening when Eliezer arrived, when all the women came to the well to draw water. Not only was Eliezer thirsty, but he also had 10 camels that were very thirsty. This created a situation for Eliezer to ask God for a sign.

Regarding signs, we cannot always ask God for a sign; we must be led by the Holy Spirit. We have to be in the right place, and we have to ask at the right time. Otherwise we may fall into error. What if Isaac had asked God for a sign ten years earlier in Canaan land? He was not in the right place; his future bride was not living there, nor would it have been the right time.

24:13-49 – *“Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the*

same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother; with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hastened, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren. And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban: and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earring and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and when he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man; and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of the LORD; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat, until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And the LORD hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, The LORD, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: Then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD

God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: Behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher to drink; And she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom the LORD hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me: and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left."

Eliezer saw the women of the city at the well, and he asked the Lord for a sign. It was time for Isaac to have a bride, and he was in the right place. Before Abraham's servant finished his prayer, Rebekah came to the well. She had no idea who Eliezer was, or his purpose for being there, or even what he had just prayed. She did not know that she was being carefully watched and tested by God. The stakes were very high.

Rebekah was being tested to see if she qualified to be the bride of perhaps the most important man of her generation, for in Isaac were all the promises of God to future generations.

Rebekah gave water to the weary traveller, as well as offered to water all of his 10 camels. Each camel was capable of drinking 30 gallons of water (30 x 10 = 300 gallons). Can you imagine how many times she had to drop the bucket into the well to quench the thirst of 10 camels? Not only was Rebekah beautiful, she was also cheerful, willing, and a very hard worker.

As one considers the women in the Bible who were chosen to be the wives of God's chosen sons, they were, without exception, all very hard workers. These are qualities Christ looks for in His bride. Then Eliezer asked, "Whose daughter art thou?" And she answered, "The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son." Eliezer had found a bride for Isaac!

The Trinity is revealed in this account. Abraham is a type of God the Father. He sought a bride for his Son. Isaac is a type of the Son of God. Eliezer is a type of the Holy Spirit. He sought out the bride, tested her, and brought her to Isaac.

God the Father selects a bride for His Son, by the Holy Spirit. We are called to be the bride of Christ. Not every born again believer will qualify to be at the marriage feast of the Lamb. The Lord taught on the Parable of the Ten Virgins, and we know the five foolish virgins were denied entrance to the marriage feast when the Bridegroom came (Mt. 25:1-13). God is watching our actions. We must pass our smaller tests so that when we come to the crucial test, as Rebekah did, we will be chosen for the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Rebekah Becomes the Bride of Isaac

24:50-67 – *“Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from the LORD: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master’s son’s wife, as the LORD hath spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham’s servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things. And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing the LORD hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. And they sent away Rebekah their sister, and her nurse, and Abraham’s servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a veil, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death.”*

Eliezer explained his mission to Rebekah’s family, and especially to her father Bethuel and brother Laban. It was evident to Rebekah’s family that the matter was from God; they would not hinder it.

After having a celebration, Eliezer wanted to return home to Abraham immediately, but Rebekah's mother and brother wanted Rebekah to stay at least another ten days. Therefore, they asked Rebekah, "Wilt thou go with this man?" She replied with these immortal words, "I will go." Rebekah had the quality of spirit that is required in every prospective bride for Christ, the willingness to go to one whom she had never seen. Though we have not seen Christ, our Heavenly Bridegroom, we love and trust Him (1 Pet. 1:8). In Revelation 14:1-5, those who are closest to the Lamb on Mount Zion are the people who "follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth." The bride of Christ must have a willingness to follow Christ wherever He goes (Ruth 1:16-17).

Thus, Rebekah left her homeland in Haran by faith and departed with Eliezer's company to the land of Canaan. Rebekah's name means "flattering" in the sense of "pleasing in appearance." Isaac was meditating in the field when Rebekah arrived. She became his bride and he loved her dearly, and was comforted after his mother Sarah's death. Isaac was 40 years old when he married (Gen. 25:20).

The Third Wife of Abraham

25:1-4 – *"Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah."* After Sarah's death, Abraham married yet a third time, this time to Keturah.

Hagar represents Israel under the Law, while Sarah represents the Church Age. Keturah symbolises Israel in the millennial period. These verses contain a record of the sons of Keturah by Abraham.

25:5-6 – *"And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country."* This clearly states that Abraham distinguished between Isaac, the son of promise, and his other children who inhabited the east country on the other side of the river Jordan. We may safely say that, today, they inhabit the countries of Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

The difference between Ishmael and Isaac, and the other sons of Abraham, are *the mothers* who bore them. Mothers symbolise churches. Spiritually, where you are birthed is very important. Some mothers (or churches) are far more spiritual than others.

The Death of Abraham

25:7-11 – *“And these are the days of the years of Abraham’s life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; The field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife. And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.”*

Abraham lived 175 years, and died. When he was 100 years old, Isaac was born, and Sodom was destroyed. The destruction of Sodom and the birth of Isaac would have been around 392 years after the Flood. Abraham’s grandsons, Jacob and Esau, were born when Abraham was 160. The twins were 15 when Abraham died. Shem outlived Abraham by 35 years, and died at the astounding age of 600. (Genesis is not in perfect chronological order.)

Isaac and Ishmael buried their father in the field Abraham had purchased in Hebron. All of these early patriarchs were buried there. Verse 8 says that Abraham was *“gathered to his people.”* We may glean a spiritual truth here. When we die, we are also gathered to our people. In eternity, we will dwell with our closest friends, those in our spiritual family. Heaven is very vast, with many different levels. Some will be very close to the Lord on Mount Zion and others will live on the fringes (or even outside) of the holy city.

Before the cross, when the righteous died, their departed spirits went into the lower parts of the earth into a resting place. They did not go into heaven until *after* the cross. Later, this temporary resting place became known as Abraham’s bosom to the Jews.

Luke 16:19-31 holds the account of a conversation held between Abraham and a rich man who had died and was now suffering the torments of hell. The rich man besought Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his five brothers to live right and escape the same place of judgment. Abraham replied, *“They have Moses and the prophets [meaning the Scriptures]; let them hear them.”*

Abraham ended by saying this remarkable statement: *“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”* After being dead nearly 2,000 years, Abraham speaks again. When Christ taught on the rich man and Lazarus, it was not a parable but an actual happening. Christ revealed something He saw in the lower parts of the earth. He saw Abraham and the prophets.

The Descendants of Ishmael

25:12-18 – *“Now these are the generations of Ishmael, Abraham’s son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah’s handmaid, bare unto Abraham: And these are the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: the firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; and Kedar, and Adbeel, and Mibsam, And Mishma, and Dumah, and Massa, Hadar, and Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah: These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations. And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, an hundred and thirty and seven years: and he gave up the ghost and died; and was gathered unto his people. And they dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, that is before Egypt, as thou goest toward Assyria: and he died in the presence of all his brethren.”*

Ishmael’s descendants, together with Abraham’s other children (excluding Isaac), as we have already stated, comprised nomadic tribes that dwelt in villages in the Arabian Desert to the east of Israel. Ishmael died at the age of 137.

PART EIGHT

The Life of Isaac

17:1 - 35:29

Without denying the historicity of these accounts from Genesis, the Apostle Paul draws lessons from them. When he studied Genesis, he understood the allegory of Hagar and her son, Ishmael, together with Sarah and her son, Isaac, by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 4:22-31 states, “For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.”

Hagar and her son represent the old covenant and its fruit. They stand for the Mosaic Law of works, bondage, Mount Sinai—and earthly Jerusalem, whose children were under slavery to Rome and the flesh. Sarah and her son Isaac represent the new covenant and its fruit. They stand for the blessings, which are received *by grace*. Sarah represents New Jerusalem whose children are free because they are born by promise (grace)—and because of the promised Holy Spirit who frees her children from sin and the fallen nature.

Several Applications

1. Old Covenant Observers Hated New Covenant Observers. In Paul’s time, the Jews and Jerusalem had rejected Christ and were trying to come to God on their own terms (Rom. 9:31-33). The Jews were Abraham’s physical seed, but many of them were not his spiritual seed (Jn. 8:37-40).

2. Moslem Nations Hate Israel. Ishmael and his seed (essentially the Moslem nations) have always mocked and attacked the seed of Isaac (Israel). They are prompted by jealousy, as they do not have the promises that Isaac's seed do.

3. Legalists and Fundamentalists Mock Pentecostals. Even in the Church today this truth can be seen. Legalists and fundamentalists who reject the baptism in the Holy Spirit persecute and mock those who are Spirit-filled. Much of the Church opposes the baptism in the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues. Those who reject the baptism in the Holy Spirit do not have the quality of the fruit or the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore they will not inherit the greater promises of God. Ishmael will always mock Isaac; it is never the other way around.

The Children of Isaac and Rebekah

25:19-26 – *“And these are the generations of Isaac, Abraham’s son: Abraham begat Isaac: And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padanaram, the sister to Laban the Syrian. And Isaac entreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. And the first came out red, all over like a hairy garment; and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau’s heel; and his name was called Jacob: and Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them.”*

Here we have the record of the background and birth of Jacob and Esau. Isaac and Rebekah now faced the same situation as Abraham and Sarah. Rebekah needed divine intervention to conceive. Isaac prayed for Rebekah's barrenness, and the Lord hearkened.

Husbands should pray for the void, unfulfilled, and unfruitful areas of need in the lives of their spouses. Women have many areas of struggle, which only the Lord can minister to. While husbands must be patient listeners, they must also major on intercession for their wives.

When Rebekah conceived, there was a struggle within her. She did not understand the conflict and inquired of the Lord, “Why am I thus?” When we have conflicts in our lives that we do not understand, we should go to God for the answers, not a psychologist. God told her the source of

her struggle. He said in effect: “There are two manner of people within you.” Of course, this was referring to the twins (Jacob and Esau), but it also has application to the struggle of two natures resident within each of us.

Rebekah is one of the seven women in the Word of God to experience the miracle birth of a son, along with Sarah, Rachel, Ruth, Manoah’s wife, Hannah, and Elisabeth. It is very interesting that all of these barren women brought forth a notable son. Sarah brought forth Isaac. Rachel brought forth Joseph. Ruth brought forth Obed (lineage of David). Manoah’s wife brought forth Samson. Hannah brought forth Samuel, and Elisabeth brought forth John the Baptist. Barrenness in these women’s lives produced great fruit.

Esau and Jacob

In one sense, the birth of twins is interesting because they denote a double portion blessing (Song 6:6). However, in this case we cannot see the blessing since Esau has been a curse to Israel throughout all generations. Jacob, often so maligned throughout the generations, is in reality introduced to us as the pious twin son of Isaac and Rebekah. In contrast, Esau, his elder brother was described as being hairy and a cunning hunter. Later on in life, Esau was known as a fornicator and a profane person (Heb. 12:15-17). A profane person is one who treats sacred things lightly.

Jacob, on the other hand, coveted spiritual honours. Yet, he did not allow God to grant them His way. The purposes of God are established by God who calls us, not by our works (Rom. 9:10-13). Jacob sought to obtain that blessing which God had declared before his birth, but he did so by deceit. Therefore, this devious nature had to be worked out of Jacob by many hardships.

We may assume that the Lord gave Rebekah twins for the following reasons:

1. To separate the traits of good and evil that were flowing through the lineage of the chosen family
2. To demonstrate the following spiritual truths:
 - a. Some people despise their God-given birthrights and privileges, and they settle for less than what God is offering them.
 - b. We absolutely must deal with everything in our lives that will draw us away from the path God has chosen for us.
 - c. When a person forfeits the blessings that God has appointed to him, his heart becomes filled with envy, anger, rage, and jealousy against the one who has taken his crown (Amos 1:11).

Problems in the Home

25:27-28 – *“And the boys grew; and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field: and Jacob was a plain man dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison: But Rebekah loved Jacob.”* Most problems in a marriage are because of a poor beginning. The case of Isaac and Rebekah is an exception to the rule. Their marriage had a wonderful beginning. They started on a good foundation. Unfortunately, as the years went by, they grew further and further apart.

One parent loved one son, and the other parent loved the other son. It is obvious from the narrative that follows that there was a communication breakdown over the years. The parents confided in their children more than in each other. Little offences must have festered into bigger ones. Their affections were not toward each other, but had shifted toward the children.

Isaac loved Esau because he enjoyed his venison. They were joined by carnal desires. Isaac had planted temporal values into the heart of Esau, who was obsessed with sport and hunting. There is only one other man mentioned specifically as a hunter in Scripture, and that is the infidel Nimrod, who was the builder of Babylon. Avid hunters tend to have a devouring nature. Rebekah, on the other hand, loved Jacob, but it was a carnal, possessive love.

The Sale of the Birthright

25:29-34 – *“And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he was faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”*

Esau’s stomach ruled his choices and desires. His *belly* was his God, as Paul writes concerning the Philippian believers who had minded earthly things (Phil. 3:19). Arriving famished from a hunting trip, Esau readily acquiesced to Jacob’s proposal that he sell him his birthright for a mess of pottage. Esau lived for the temporal. He wanted his present appetites satisfied, and he wanted them gratified *now*. This is precisely the reason many believers sell eternal rewards. Paul warns New Testament believers of this very thing (Heb. 12:16-17). Remember that in the Garden, sin entered the world because of *appetite*.

The Famine in the Land

26:1-5 – *“And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”*

In the book of Genesis there are three specific periods of famine mentioned as coinciding with the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (and Joseph).

In the case of Abraham and Jacob (and Joseph), this meant actually going down into the land of Egypt. Joseph was there prior to the calamity in readiness to care for his father Jacob and the rest of his family.

In the case of Isaac, God specifically told him not to go down into Egypt, but rather to dwell in the land of the Philistines. Isaac represents the born again believer who must not go back into the world for help in times of trouble.

While this type holds true, Abraham’s going into Egypt and coming out again could foreshadow something else. Abraham’s seed would later go down into Egypt and be delivered from Egypt, representing the journey of the believer from Egypt (the world) to the land of promise (heaven). Jacob also went down into Egypt so that his seed could be nourished and multiplied, and he is a type of the Christian who is saved by the Passover Lamb, and commences his spiritual journey to Zion.

Isaac received the oath, which God made to his father Abraham uniquely because of Abraham’s faithfulness and obedience to God and His laws and statutes.

The Temptation of Isaac with Respect to His Wife

26:6-11 – *“And Isaac dwelt in Gerar: And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold,*

Isaac was sporting with [or caressing] Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said, Behold, of a surety she is thy wife: and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.”

Isaac repeated the same sin as that of his father Abraham (Gen. 12:13; 20:2). Thus we see that the temptation that Abraham had failed with respect to Sarah in Egypt, was now transferred to Isaac, who also failed. This teaches us a lesson that we should seek to triumph in *all* circumstances. For if we do not, that failure could well be passed on to our seed, who may likewise come short.

However, in the case of Ahaz and his son Hezekiah, Hezekiah triumphed where his father had failed. Hezekiah was made of better material. When foreign aggressors attacked Ahaz, he sent to other evil nations for help. When enemy countries surrounded Hezekiah, he relied on the Lord alone. (Compare 2 Chronicles 28:1-27 with 32:1-22.)

Isaac - Type of the Hundredfold Christian

26:12-14 – *“Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the LORD blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great: For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines envied him.”*

In His parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus spoke of the seed that fell into good ground, bringing forth some thirty fold, some sixty fold and the ultimate one hundredfold (Mt. 13:3-23). Isaac, we are told, brought forth also *one hundred fold* in the natural sense when he sowed his seed in the ground.

Thus in Isaac’s life we shall have some understanding of that which enables us to be a hundredfold Christian. The key lies in the fact that if one is godly, he will suffer persecution. This was certainly the case with Isaac, for the Philistines who had opposed his father Abraham and stopped up his wells, opposed him.

Blocked Wells

26:15-17 – *“For all the wells which his father’s servants had digged in the days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth. And Abimelech said unto*

Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we. And Isaac departed thence, and pitched his tent in the valley of Gerar, and dwelt there.”

The Philistines, who at this point in history were limited in number and power, began to fill up the wells that were essential to Isaac’s continued prosperity, and he acceded to their request that he leave their territory. Thus we see Isaac, *our role model to fruitfulness*, not resisting the evil. Isaac was a man of peace. He had the promises of God and knew that he did not have to fight or grasp to anything. People who have the promises of God can afford to be gentle and hold things lightly. They know that ultimately no one will be able to take away what God has given them.

26:18-20 – *“And Isaac digged again the wells of water, which they had digged in the days of Abraham his father; for the Philistines had stopped them after the death of Abraham: and he called their names after the names by which his father had called them. And Isaac’s servants digged in the valley, and found there a well of springing water. And the herdmen of Gerar did strive with Isaac’s herdmen, saying, The water is ours: and he called the name of the well Esek; because they strove with him.”* The Philistines represent envy, hatred and jealousy. When you are blessed, “the Philistines” will oppose you. Often, when you start a well (a move of the Spirit), the Philistines will strive with you and say, “This bubbling water is mine, it is because of me; I started this revival.”

Esek means “contention.” Disputes over water rights were common in desert areas. Envy produces contention. The key to a saint’s victory over these is the way of Isaac—humility and meekness. Meekness could be defined as “a holy acceptance of one’s circumstances with joy.” In this context, humility could be described as “a complete, holy dependence upon God.”

Jesus Christ designated the last part of Leviticus 19:18 as the second greatest commandment (Mt. 22:39; Mk. 12:31, 33; Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8). Remember also the very words of our Lord Himself, “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also” (Mt. 5:39).

26:21 – *“And they digged another well, and strove for that also: and he called the name of it Sitnah.”* There then follows another attack of the enemy against Isaac at Sitnah. Sitnah means “enmity or hatred.” Again, our role model of the hundredfold Christian forbears to contend for his own rights.

26:22 – *“And he removed from thence, and digged another well; and for that they strove not: and he called the name of it Rehoboth; and he said, For now the LORD hath made room for us, and we*

shall be fruitful in the land.” Rehoboth means “plenty of room.” The Lord will make room for us in His good time as we follow in the footsteps of Isaac. He will make room for us and bring us into our own.

KEYS TO BEING A HUNDREDFOLD CHRISTIAN

- *Have the Promises of God*
- *Be a Peacemaker*
- *Do not demand rights*
- *Have Humility*
- *Possess Meekness*

God Reaffirms His Oath to Isaac

26:23-24 – *“And he went up from thence to Beersheba. And the LORD appeared unto him the same night, and said, I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed for my servant Abraham’s sake.”* Isaac continued his journey. The appearance of the Lord, confirming again the Abrahamic covenant, called for the building of an altar and worship of the Lord.

26:25 – *“And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there: and there Isaac’s servants digged a well.”* Beersheba is known as “the well of the seven” referring to the seven lambs that were used by Abraham to confirm an oath he made with Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-34). It would signify the end of the spiritual journey for Isaac, as well as for his father Abraham. This would be analogous in our day to one who has fulfilled his spiritual journey through the seven feasts of the Lord, even unto Zion. (Please refer to our book entitled *The Journey of Israel* for further study.)

Isaac’s Enemies at Peace with Him

26:26-33 – *“Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, and Ahuzzath one of his friends, and Phichol the chief captain of his army. And Isaac said unto them, Wherefore come ye to me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you? And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make*

a covenant with thee; That thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace: thou art now the blessed of the LORD. And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace. And it came to pass the same day, that Isaac's servants came, and told him concerning the well which they had digged, and said unto him, We have found water. And he called it Shebah: therefore the name of the city is Beersheba unto this day."

Now a beautiful promise is realised for Isaac, based upon Proverbs 16:7, which says, "When a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." The Philistines recognised that God was blessing Isaac, and sought to make a covenant of peace with him. Abimelech, fearing possible reprisals from Isaac, sought and received an agreement from Isaac to live in peace.

Family Grief

26:34-35 – *"And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: Which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah."* These verses give some comfort, I believe, to the saints of all ages who have hit the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus in their own personal lives, yet have children that have made serious errors of judgments in their own lives, bringing grief to their godly parents.

Esau married at age 40, as his father Isaac (Gen. 25:20). However, Esau married two heathen women, additional evidence of his spiritual dullness. Later he took a third wife, when he was depressed and angry (Gen. 28:6-9). We will now leave the life of Isaac because his closing years are more a commentary of his son Jacob's life than his own.

PART NINE

The Life of Jacob

25:1 - 50:26

The Blessing of Jacob by Deception

27:1-2 – *“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, here am I. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: ”* Isaac was about 130 or 140 years old at this time, and he lived at least 40 more years (Gen. 35:28). Isaac died at 180, when Jacob was 120, and Joseph was 29. When Jacob was 130, Joseph was 39 (Gen. 47:9).

27:3-4 – *“Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field, and take me some venison; And make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die.”* Isaac still favoured Esau, ignoring the facts that he had bartered his birthright for a bowl of soup, and married heathen women. Thus, he disregarded the word to Rebekah (Gen. 25:23). Deathbed bequests were legally binding.

27:5 – *“And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt for venison, and to bring it.”* Isaac, certainly at least in his old age, was a man who was governed by his stomach and carnal desires. It is regrettable in such a singular saint of God that these appetites had not been dealt with. Food has little interest for those who follow after the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Also, to eat before blessing is not the norm of the godly. In the Book of Acts, they always prayed and fasted before they laid hands upon people for prophetic guidance and direction (Acts 13:1-3).

The Deceitful Plan of Rebekah

Sadly, in presenting this portion of Scripture, we can only look with disapproval upon the attitude of Rebekah. The divided home life, and the fact that Jacob held a higher place in her heart than obedience and veneration to her husband, caused this blemish upon the character of this notable woman of God. Although God achieves His purposes through our blemishes, let us not fall into the trap of those Christians in Paul’s day who were saying: “Let us do evil, that good may come” (Rom. 3:8).

When a woman takes matters into her own hands, she is destroying her home and marriage (Prov. 14:1). The deceit demonstrated by Rebekah was imparted to, and deeply ingrained, in her favourite son, Jacob. This deceit in Jacob came from two things: Rebekah's bloodline, and her evil example.

27:6-8 – *“And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savory meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee.”* Rebekah was very dominant and possessive. She ran the life of her son, even though he was an adult. She commanded her son to implicitly obey her, and she put him up to deceive and betray his father.

27:9 – *“Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savory meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death.”* Goats speak of rebellion. This whole plot was an act of rebellion.

27:11-13 – *“And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them.”* Regretfully, Jacob's only objection to the plan was the fear of being found out, and inheriting a curse instead of the blessings, as is seen by his response. Thus, Jacob revealed a side of his character that had to be purged before he could inherit the blessings that the Lord had promised him before his birth.

Rebekah answered his objection to the scheme by offering to take any curse that might follow if Isaac discovered the deception. She threw all caution to the wind by saying: “Upon me be thy curse, my son.” This is an important truth because a counsellor is held more accountable than the one counselled. Likewise, a teacher is held more responsible than the students (Jas. 3:1). In this case, as far as Scripture reveals, Rebekah never saw her son again after this episode.

27:14-17 – *“And he went, and fetched, and brought them to his mother: and his mother made savory meat, such as his father loved. And Rebekah took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau, which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son: And she put the skins of the kids of the goats upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck: And she gave the savory meat and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.”*

You will note, dear reader, that Rebekah was leaving nothing to chance. She dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes, placed hairy goatskins on his hands and neck, and skilfully prepared a substitute meal. In this way, her husband Isaac was completely deceived.

How sad that she had not sought the Lord with the same diligence, so that He could have intervened lawfully on behalf of Jacob. She remembered and cherished the prophetic word that was given her at the birth of the twins that “the elder would serve the younger” (Gen. 25:22-23). Truly, she did not believe that God could bring that to pass without her help.

Half of the verses regarding the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:10-31 pertain to the clothes she makes with her hands, and with what she clothes her household. In this case, Rebekah was clothing her household with a cloak of deceit and other evil garments. Perhaps mothers have the greatest influence of all upon a child, the power to clothe their children with good or evil coverings.

Jacob Deceives His Father

27:18-26 – *“And he came unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I; who art thou, my son? And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy firstborn; I have done according as thou badest me: arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because the LORD thy God brought it to me. And Isaac said unto Jacob, Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau or not. And Jacob went near unto Isaac his father; and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau. And he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him. And he said, Art thou my very son Esau? And he said, I am. And he said, Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee. And he brought it near to him, and he did eat: and he brought him wine, and he drank. And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son.”*

We see that Jacob chose to break several of the Ten Commandments deliberately in order to receive the cherished blessing. He lied, thus breaking the ninth commandment. He then committed sacrilege, breaking the third commandment, by taking the name of the Lord in vain.

The Blessing of Jacob

27:27-29 – *“And he came near, and kissed him: and he smelled the smell of his raiment, and blessed him, and said, See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the LORD hath*

blessed: Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine: Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee." Therefore, after eating and drinking, Isaac blessed Jacob, believing him all the time to be Esau. He made him lord over his brethren and pronounced the Abrahamic blessing upon him—that all who bless him shall be blessed and those who curse him shall be cursed.

The Return of Esau His Unavailing Remorse

27:30-37 – *“And it came to pass, as soon as Isaac had made an end of blessing Jacob, and Jacob was yet scarce gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. And he also had made savoury meat, and brought it unto his father, and said unto his father, Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me. And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou? And he said, I am thy son, thy firstborn Esau. And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who? where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed. And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father. And he said, Thy brother came with subtlety, and hath taken away thy blessing. And he said, Is not he rightly named Jacob? for he hath supplanted me these two times: he took away my birthright; and, behold, now he hath taken away my blessing. And he said, Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me? And Isaac answered and said unto Esau, Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given to him for servants; and with corn and wine have I sustained him: and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?”*

Although the blessing had been received by a deceptive stratagem, it was still valid. Esau, who had lost his birthright through selling it to Jacob for a mess of pottage, now loses his blessing. We should bear in mind that the Lord permitted this, although it was not because He approved of Jacob's deceitful ways. We must understand that there is a principle in the Word of God, when we set our feet in a certain path, after a time we become established in that way. Daniel states: “He giveth wisdom to the wise” (Dan. 2:21). The Lord Jesus confirmed this in the parables of the talents and the pounds, saying: “To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance” (Mt. 25:29). Thus Jacob received both the birthright and the blessing. Esau lost them because, in a sense, he had placed himself in the pathway of those who despise (or take lightly) spiritual things.

We see this principle applied to the life of Pharaoh, who hardened his heart ten times (Ex. 8-14). Because of this, God hardened his heart ten times so that he should not repent. So it was with Esau.

Paul tells us that Esau found no place of repentance though he sought it carefully with tears (Heb. 12:17). Therefore, beloved, let us seek always to set our feet in the way of good men that the Lord, in His mercy, will establish us in His path and we will thereby reap the eternal fruits.

Esau's Blessing

27:38 – *“And Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.”* Isaac could not reverse the blessing. Although we should bear in mind that God was in complete control, and the blessing Esau desired would have gone to Jacob regardless. This was a final lesson God taught Jacob on his deathbed many years later (Gen. 48:17-20) when he was blessing the two sons of Joseph (Heb. 11:20-21).

27:39 – *“And Isaac his father answered and said unto him, Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.”* It is better rendered this way: *“Thy dwelling shall be away from the fatness of the earth, and away from the dew of heaven from above.”* Esau's descendants (the Edomites) would occupy a territory less fertile than Canaan (Mal. 1:3).

27:40 – *“And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.”* Esau's blessing was an earthly and temporal benefit, inferior to Jacob's blessing, and foretold the constant conflict between his brother and their seed unto all generations. This is a fact that we know to be true unto this day, since Edom is incorporated into the present Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which is constantly at strife with the nation of Israel. Also, there were times in history when Edom had the dominion over Israel, as the prophecy declared (Amos 1:9-12, Mal. 1:1-5).

Esau's Rage and Its Consequences

27:41-46 – *“And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, purposing to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran; And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget that which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?”*

Thus because of his loss of the Abrahamic blessing to Jacob, Esau determined to kill Jacob upon the supposed early demise of his father Isaac, which did not occur for over 40 years (Gen. 35:27-29). All the participants of this scenario were now punished.

1. *Isaac* preferred Esau to Jacob in face of the divine word that the elder would serve the younger. He suffered by the fact that he would no longer have Jacob, who fled to Haran for refuge for 20 years. Instead, he would be in the company of the family of Esau that caused nothing but heartache because of his marriage to the daughters of Heth (Gen. 26:34-35), as well as his subsequent marriage to a daughter of Ishmael (Gen. 28:6-9).
2. *Rebekah* would never see her favourite son again as far we know from Scripture. Instead she would be surrounded with the daughters of the heathen, by whom her life was wearied, and later she would have the daughter of Ishmael as her daughter-in-law.
3. *Esau* lost his birthright and all subsequent blessings, and purposed in his heart to kill Jacob. The venom of perpetual hatred has infected all his seed to this day (Ezek. 35:5-7, Obad. 1:10).
4. *Jacob* would suffer, in reality, until the end of his life. First, he would suffer at the hands of Laban for 20 years, and then through the deceit of his sons, with respect to Joseph.

The Sending of Jacob by Isaac to Get a Wife

28:1 – “*And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan.*” The Messianic line had to be jealously guarded; therefore, Jacob could not marry a Canaanite. The biblical genealogical references are very helpful in clarifying our understanding of Canaan. According to Genesis 9:18 and 10:6, Canaan was a son of Ham, one of the three sons of Noah.

Genesis 10:15-20 clarifies the implications of this Hamitic descent in the sons of Canaan: Sidon, Heth, the Jebusites, the Amorites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, the Arkites, the Sinites, the Arvadites, and Zemarites, and the Hamathites. Thus, a Canaanite was a descendant of Ham, the cursed.

28:2 – “*Arise, go to Padanaram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother’s father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother.*” Jacob was instructed to go to Laban to take a wife of one of his daughters. Laban, Rebekah’s brother was far more deceitful than Rebekah. Deceit was a generational sin of that family. Laban was also the father of Leah

and Rachel (Gen. 29:16). They lived in the city of Nahor, which was probably close to the metropolis of Haran (also called Padanaram in Gen. 25:20; 28:2), Abraham’s ancestral home.

28:3-5 – *“And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padanaram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob’s and Esau’s mother.”* Isaac then pronounces the blessing of Abraham upon Jacob and he is firmly established to have the Messianic blessing. Then he sends him to Uncle Laban.

Esau Takes Another Wife

28:6-9 – *“When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham’s son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.”*

Esau contracts a further marriage. Unfortunately, as the old proverb states, “Two wrongs do not make a right.” Esau, in seeking to win the approval of his parents in this way, did not achieve the desired result. He linked his future to the line of Ishmael who, like himself, was not in the line of the Abrahamic blessing. Looking at the fruit that followed, it is clear that Esau’s wives and their children had great animosity toward Jacob and his family. They are the Edomites.

Jacob’s Ladder

28:10-18 – *“And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And,*

behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven. And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it.”

In a dream of the night whilst beginning his journey from Beersheba to Haran, the dwelling place of Laban, Jacob saw a ladder with angels ascending and descending from earth to heaven. At the top of the ladder was the Lord Himself who pronounced yet another confirmation that the blessing of Abraham would be given to Jacob and his seed after him.

Furthermore the Lord promised to be with Jacob withersoever he went and that He would bring him safely back to the land of his inheritance. Jacob really needed to hear this. He was going to have many sorrows at his Uncle Laban’s home because God had to rid him of a deceitful nature to make him worthy of the high calling.

Often the Lord gives extraordinary promises prior to trials so that by them we might wage a good warfare and be encouraged during those times of deep despair (1 Tim. 1:18). God did not grant these mountaintop experiences to Jacob because he was spiritual. Jacob had just lied to his father, blasphemed, and swindled his brother. God gave him these special blessings to help him through the trials of life that would make him spiritual.

The Promise to Tithe

28:19-22 – *“And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, So that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God’s house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.”*

There at Bethel, Jacob made a vow unto God. We are so prone to make vows, as Jacob did, in times of doubt and testings. His particular vow was to give unto God a tithe (or a tenth) of all his income and possessions that he would receive of the Lord. The giving of the tithe to God should not be associated simply with a Jewish custom. Rather, it antedated Israel, because we

find that even Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec before the era of the Law. Giving one tenth of our wages to God ensures untold spiritual as well as natural blessings (Mal. 3:10-11).

Jacob's Arrival at Haran

29:1-8 – *“Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east. And he looked, and behold a well in the field, and, lo, there were three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks: and a great stone was upon the well's mouth. And thither were all the flocks gathered: and they rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the sheep, and put the stone again upon the well's mouth in his place. And Jacob said unto them, My brethren, whence be ye? And they said, Of Haran are we. And he said unto them, Know ye Laban the son of Nahor? And they said, We know him. And he said unto them, Is he well? And they said, He is well: and, behold, Rachel his daughter cometh with the sheep. And he said, Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together: water ye the sheep, and go and feed them. And they said, We cannot, until all the flocks be gathered together, and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep.”*

There is a certain sense of loneliness when one travels in unknown parts, especially when journeying alone. The description used in verse 1 highlights the uncertainties that a stranger feels, for it was not a city but in reality a nomadic area where Jacob must have felt the fears of the one who is among a strange people. Suffice it to say that they had to inform him of the customs of the land with respect to the removing of the stone from the well.

The Meeting of Jacob and Rachel

29:9-12 – *“And while he yet spake with them, Rachel came with her father's sheep: for she kept them. And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near, and rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. And Jacob kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice, and wept. And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother, and that he was Rebekah's son: and she ran and told her father.”*

It was as the romanticists say, “love at first sight” for Jacob and Rachel. However, this was in the plan of God, and it started one of the severest trials ever in the life of Jacob, to purify him of his deceitful strain. His mother Rebekah had also been viewed as a prospective bride at the well, as we remember from chapter 24. In this case, however, there was no prayer or sign of confirmation. Jacob, overcome with emotion, took Rachel and kissed her.

The Meeting of Jacob and Laban

29:13-14 – *“And it came to pass, when Laban heard the tidings of Jacob his sister’s son, that he ran to meet him, and embraced him, and kissed him, and brought him to his house. And he told Laban all these things. And Laban said to him, Surely thou art my bone and my flesh. And he abode with him the space of a month.”* The declaration of Laban that Jacob was “his bone and flesh” had more truth than we realise at first glance. Whereas Jacob was a deceiver, his uncle was *the master deceiver*, as we shall soon see.

To purify us of blemishes in our character, the Lord often puts us alongside those who possess the same defects but in much greater magnitude and amplification. This is to help us see our problem more clearly and to hate it exceedingly. Thus the situation was ordained for Jacob that the Lord could make him worthy to belong to the Messianic lineage and to be a partaker of the Abrahamic covenant.

The Marriage Covenant

29:15-20 – *“And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter. And Laban said, It is better that I give her to thee, than that I should give her to another man: abide with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her.”*

Seemingly generous, Laban offered to give Jacob wages for his service to him. Jacob responded by declaring that he would work seven years for Rachel. It is difficult to determine the dowry price of a bride in those days, or if indeed the custom existed at all. However, the equivalent price that Jacob offered would have been in the neighbourhood of a quarter of a million dollars (USD). The price was meant more as a compliment to Rachel. This is normal in some parts of the world even today—the higher the price, often the better the ensuing marriage relationships, as a consequence of the high esteem the bridegroom has for his wife.

The Consummation of the Marriage

29:21-30 – *“And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her. And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast. And it*

came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her. And Laban gave unto his daughter Leah Zilpah his maid for an handmaid. And it came to pass, that in the morning, behold, it was Leah: and he said to Laban, What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me? And Laban said, It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn. Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years. And Jacob did so, and fulfilled her week: and he gave him Rachel his daughter to wife also. And Laban gave to Rachel his daughter Bilhah his handmaid to be her maid. And he went in also unto Rachel, and he loved also Rachel more than Leah, and served with him yet seven other years.”

Laban had two daughters as well as an unspecified number of sons. Leah, the firstborn, was weak-eyed and therefore was considered less good-looking than her sister. Jacob, dearly in love with Rachel, had agreed to serve seven years to have her. Instead, Laban gave him Leah. He was able to do so because the wedding was at night and she was veiled. Therefore, Jacob did not know until the morning that he was married to the wrong girl.

In giving Leah to be wed to Jacob, the excuse that it was customary to give the older in marriage first was inadmissible. Laban should have made the custom known to Jacob (if in fact it was a custom of the land). It was clear that, by his deception, he sought to gain another seven years of service from Jacob. This was a very bitter experience for Jacob, but he was learning to hate deceit. Jacob was made to serve another seven years to have Rachel, the girl he loved. Later, under the Mosaic Law, a man could not marry two sisters. In fact, it was an act of bigamy.

God’s purpose in the Garden was that marriage be lifelong and monogamous (Mt. 19:8-9). Although polygamy was not strictly forbidden in the Old Testament, it was *never* blessed. Leviticus 18:18 says, “Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her life time.” Polygamous marriage to living sisters was forbidden under the Law of Moses. Therefore, from many aspects, this became a sinful relationship. The fact that God used it to bring forth His purposes does not mean it can be used to condone sin. A life of misery ensued for all of those who were involved, as we shall see later.

The Children of the Marriages

Unto Leah, the hated one, were born six sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. The other six sons were born to Rachel and the two handmaids. These are the fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

29:31-32 – *“And when the LORD saw that Leah was hated, he opened her womb: but Rachel was barren. And Leah conceived, and bare a son, and she called his name Reuben: for she said, Surely the LORD hath looked upon my affliction; now therefore my husband will love me.”* Reuben means, “Behold a son.” Leah had received this son as recompense from God because of her affliction since her husband hated her.

She had plaintively declared, *“now therefore my husband will love me.”* However, love is not predicated upon having children but upon a heart relationship between husband and wife. That love was never there because, in the first place, Jacob preferred Rachel. Furthermore, hatred had entered into the hearts of Jacob and Rachel towards Leah since they had both suffered by reason of her deceit. Remember, Leah went along with the deceit of her father. Jacob did not even know until morning that his new bride was Leah, not Rachel. Jacob was never quite able to rid himself of the resentment he felt of being married to a woman against his will.

29:33 – *“And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Because the LORD hath heard that I was hated, he hath therefore given me this son also: and she called his name Simeon.”* Simeon means “hearing” because God had once again heard of Leah’s affliction. Jacob was never able to love Leah because of the manner in which she got him.

29:34 – *“And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi.”* Levi signifies “joined.” He was so named because Leah hoped that she would now be *joined* to her husband because she had born him three sons. Unfortunately, Jacob never loved her. However, as with all our weaknesses and follies, we have a God who can bring forth something beautiful from our errors. This was so in the case of Levi. Levi later became the tribe that joined himself to the Lord at Mount Sinai and received the priesthood.

29:35 – *“And she conceived again, and bare a son: and she said, Now will I praise the LORD: therefore she called his name Judah; and left bearing.”* Judah means “praise.” From Judah would come the tribe that received the throne rights. This was also the tribe from which our Lord descended. Leah left bearing for a time.

Born of Envy

30:1-2 – *“And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister: and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die. And Jacob’s anger was kindled against Rachel: and he said Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb?”*

Rachel was filled with envy, and turned to Jacob as the reason for her barren womb. Jacob points out that it is God, not man, who is in control of the woman's womb.

There are several very important points to observe in these verses. First of all, Rachel expected her husband to meet all her needs, and she was frustrated because he was unable to do so. In addition, it was very frustrating to Jacob. Rachel's demeanour was so different from Hannah's (1 Sam. 1:6-20). There was a time when Hannah also was barren. However, instead of Hannah's expecting her husband to meet all her needs, she sought *the Lord*, and He met her needs. Every woman should understand this truth.

A bride must not go into marriage with unrealistic expectations and demand that her husband meet all her needs. She must press into God on her own to have those void areas of her life fulfilled, or she will create a very unpleasant atmosphere in the home and marriage.

30:3-6 – *“And she said, Behold my maid Bilhah, go in unto her; and she shall bear upon my knees, that I may also have children by her. And she gave him Bilhah her handmaid to wife: and Jacob went in unto her. And Bilhah conceived, and bare Jacob a son. And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan.”* Another important point to remember is that Rachel took matters into her own hands when she gave Bilhah to Jacob. The spirit of envy in which such a transaction was made showed up in the life of the son who was born.

Dan, we could say, was born out of the motive of envy. The name *Dan* means, “judging, or judged of God.” Dan and his descendants became apostate, and the tribe of Dan is omitted in the Book of Revelation.

The motive for the birth of any work is so important. Works that are started for God must be born out of the right motives. “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife [or rivalry], and some also of good will” (Phil. 1:15). Many works that are started (supposedly in the Lord's name) are not founded with the right motives. Envy, rivalry, and competition are their foundation, and the fruit of them will be evil and will not remain. We must watch for Dan in the Church. There is a spiritual envy—wanting something from God that someone else has—that will produce a counterfeit. Be sure that what is manifested is true and from God. The key is to have pure motives.

The Antichrist will be presented to our generation, and he will be filled with envy. Satan is full of envy and wants to draw all the attention and worship of mankind away from Christ, to himself.

30:7-8 – *“And Bilhah Rachel’s maid conceived again, and bare Jacob a second son. And Rachel said, With great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed: and she called his name Naphtali.”* Naphtali means “wrestling,” and reveals the conflict that Rachel had continually with her elder sister. Leah, now seeing that she had left childbearing, gave Zilpah her maid to Jacob. This resulted in the birth of Gad and Asher.

30:9-11 – *“When Leah saw that she had left bearing, she took Zilpah her maid, and gave her Jacob to wife. And Zilpah Leah’s maid bare Jacob a son. And Leah said, A troop cometh: and she called his name Gad.”* Gad, meaning “a troop is coming” is a type of the overcomers (Gen. 49:19).

30:12-13 – *“And Zilpah Leah’s maid bare Jacob a second son. And Leah said, Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed: and she called his name Asher.”* Asher, the second son of Zilpah, means “happy or blessed.”

30:14-16 – *“And Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest, and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them unto his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, Give me, I pray thee, of thy son’s mandrakes. And she said unto her, Is it a small matter that thou hast taken my husband? and wouldest thou take away my son’s mandrakes also? And Rachel said, Therefore he shall lie with thee to night for thy son’s mandrakes. And Jacob came out of the field in the evening, and Leah went out to meet him, and said, Thou must come in unto me; for surely I have hired thee with my son’s mandrakes. And he lay with her that night.”*

Leah, by giving of her son Reuben’s mandrakes to Rachel, hired Jacob to be with her at night and conceived another two sons. Jacob’s wives were treating him with so much disrespect by bargaining with each other to determine who would have him each night. It was a terrible situation. This is one of the reasons the New Testament forbids bigamy and polygamy.

30:17-18 – *“And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar.”* Issachar means “hired” or “burden bearer.”

30:19-20 – *“And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son. And Leah said, God hath endued me with a good dowry; now will my husband dwell with me, because I have born him six sons: and she called his name Zebulun.”* Zebulun means “a dwelling place.” Leah was still trying to win Jacob’s love by having all these children, but she could not. Deceit is a terrible thing. If only Christians would be righteous in all of their dealings there would be great happiness.

The whole reason for sorrow and misery in the lives of many believers is because of their lack of righteousness. We are not referring to the unbelievers, but born again, Spirit-filled Christians.

30:21 – *“And afterwards she bare a daughter; and called her name Dinah.”* Leah then bears a daughter Dinah, meaning “judgment,” and truly she was used to bring judgment upon many through her immorality as seen in chapter 34. She fell into sin because she started mingling with worldly friends. This is a serious warning to all young girls.

30:22-24 – *“And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. And she conceived, and bare a son; and said, God hath taken away my reproach: And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son.”* Rachel, the third of the seven barren women of the Bible, was now accorded a son by the mercy of God. Joseph was the son who took away the reproach of Rachel. He was the one who received the double portion blessing. Joseph means “adding.” Benjamin, the other son, was the only son of the 12 to be born in the land of promise (Gen. 35:16-20). Rachel died during his birth.

The Prosperity of Jacob

30:25-30 – *“And it came to pass, when Rachel had born Joseph, that Jacob said unto Laban, Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my country. Give me my wives and my children, for whom I have served thee, and let me go: for thou knowest my service which I have done thee. And Laban said unto him, I pray thee, if I have found favour in thine eyes, tarry: for I have learned by experience that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake. And he said, Appoint me thy wages, and I will give it. And he said unto him, Thou knowest how I have served thee, and how thy cattle was with me. For it was little which thou hadst before I came, and it is now increased unto a multitude; and the LORD hath blessed thee since my coming: and now when shall I provide for mine own house also?”*

After Joseph’s birth, Jacob told Laban that he wanted to return home to Canaan. The 20 years spent with Uncle Laban had brought about much anguish and brokenness of spirit in Jacob’s life. Laban was reluctant to let Jacob depart because he recognised that the Lord’s presence was with Jacob and that because of Jacob, Laban had prospered. Jacob was aware of this, too.

30:31-36 – *“And he said, What shall I give thee? And Jacob said, Thou shalt not give me any thing: if thou wilt do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep thy flock. I will pass through all thy flock to day, removing from thence all the speckled and spotted cattle, and all the brown cattle among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats: and of such shall be my hire. So*

shall my righteousness answer for me in time to come, when it shall come for my hire before thy face: every one that is not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the sheep, that shall be counted stolen with me. And Laban said, Behold, I would it might be according to thy word. And he removed that day the he goats that were ringstreaked and spotted, and all the she goats that were speckled and spotted, and every one that had some white in it, and all the brown among the sheep, and gave them into the hand of his sons. And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks."

Therefore, a new arrangement was made between the uncle and nephew. All the cattle that were streaked, speckled, or spotted were to be Jacob's, whilst the others were to be kept by Laban. Laban was very pleased with the proposition. A three days' journey divided Laban and Jacob. In a sense, this speaks of divine separation.

30:37-43 – *"And Jacob took him rods of green poplar, and of the hazel and chestnut tree; and pilled white streaks in them, and made the white appear which was in the rods. And he set the rods which he had pilled before the flocks in the gutters in the watering troughs when the flocks came to drink, that they should conceive when they came to drink. And the flocks conceived before the rods, and brought forth cattle ringstreaked, speckled, and spotted. And Jacob did separate the lambs, and set the faces of the flocks toward the ringstreaked, and all the brown in the flock of Laban; and he put his own flocks by themselves, and put them not unto Laban's cattle. And it came to pass, whensoever the stronger cattle did conceive, that Jacob laid the rods before the eyes of the cattle in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. But when the cattle were feeble, he put them not in: so the feebler were Laban's, and the stronger Jacob's. And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses."*

Jacob arranged things so that when the strong cattle conceived by the water troughs, he placed rods with white stripes before their eyes. Looking much at those unusual striped sticks, they brought forth young ones that were striped. When the weaker cattle conceived, he removed the striped rods so that the young were not striped. Therefore, the weaker cattle were Laban's, and the stronger were Jacob's. This process was revealed to Jacob in a dream (Gen. 31:8-12). It is clear that this was a God-ordained method by which Jacob would be enriched to the detriment of Laban. It was now time for Laban to be judged by God for his deceitfulness.

Our Spiritual Condition Given to Our Offspring at Conception

There is a more important spiritual truth that I want to consider from this account. Evidently, according to the spiritual condition of parents when a child is conceived, so is the state of the child.

I can recall that on more than one occasion as parents have inquired of God why their children have had certain bents or inclinations in their characters, that the Lord has invariably pointed them back to their spiritual condition at the *conception* of the child.

This principle may be seen in Scripture from the life of Hezekiah. It was during the period of his pride, after his healing, that he begat Manasseh. Manasseh exuded pride, and with it came spiritual blindness, resulting in a period of awesome apostasy for Judah over a period of some 40 years (2 Chr. 32:24-26; 33:9-12, 18-20). David and Bathsheba passed on an adulterous nature of lust to their son, Solomon. Thus, we can see the awesome responsibility for passing on a good nature and good propensities to our offspring. Certainly, we will reap what we sow.

Jacob's Determination to Return to Canaan Laban's Heart Turned Against Him

31:1-6 – *“And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory. And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before. And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee. And Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field unto his flock, And said unto them, I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me. And ye know that with all my power I have served your father.”*

With Jacob's cattle now strong and multiplying, and Laban's enfeebled, Laban's favour was no longer towards Jacob. Therefore, Jacob persuaded his wives to leave with him and return to the land of his inheritance. Sometimes when we are out of favour with people, God moves us on. However, we must make sure that we have done what was right in God's eyes.

31:7 – *“And your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times; but God suffered him not to hurt me.”* Jacob had been treated very harshly during those 20 years with Uncle Laban.

31:8-13 – *“If he said thus, The speckled shall be thy wages; then all the cattle bare speckled: and if he said thus, The ringstreaked shall be thy hire; then bare all the cattle ringstreaked. Thus God hath taken away the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass at the time that the cattle conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold, the rams which leaped upon the cattle were ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled. And the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying, Jacob: And I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstreaked, speckled, and grisled: for*

I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.”

It is evident that God was defending and directing Jacob, and recompensing Laban for his evil done to Jacob. Now the Lord Himself is telling Jacob to return home. Also, circumstances were dictating his return.

The Flight of Jacob and Family

31:14-18 – *“And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father’s house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours, and our children’s: now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do. Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons and his wives upon camels; And he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten in Padanaram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.”* Rachel and Leah both agreed that it was time to leave their father’s house. Therefore Jacob gathered his family and his large herds of cattle, and departed for the land of Canaan to go unto Isaac his father.

Hidden Idolatry Laban Overtakes Jacob

31:19-35 – *“And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father’s. And Jacob stole away unawares to Laban the Syrian, in that he told him not that he fled. So he fled with all that he had; and he rose up, and passed over the river, and set his face toward the mount Gilead. And it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob was fled. And he took his brethren with him, and pursued after him seven days’ journey; and they overtook him in the mount Gilead. And God came to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad. Then Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mount: and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mount of Gilead. And Laban said to Jacob, What hast thou done, that thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret, and with harp? And hast not suffered me to kiss my sons and my daughters? thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take thou heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good*

or bad. And now, though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longedst after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods? And Jacob answered and said to Laban, Because I was afraid: for I said, Peradventure thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me. With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched, but found not the images."

Jacob had left Padanaram without Laban's knowledge. Upon leaving, Rachel had taken her father's images or gods that he worshipped. Those gods or images symbolised authority; therefore, whosoever possessed them was the priest or the head of the family. She was trying to make sure that her son Joseph was the heir. The contention with Leah carried on. Rachel wanted to be sure that her seed (not Leah's) had the blessing. Rachel hid her idols so well that even her husband did not know she had them. This signifies that the idols were well hidden in her heart.

This obviously permitted a spirit of idolatry to enter into the lineage of Rachel. Although it passed over the spotless life of Joseph, it surfaced in his descendants, especially Ephraim. This can be seen particularly when we study the Book of Hosea, which deals specifically with the idolatry of Ephraim. Sometimes a sin will skip one generation and come out strongly in the next one.

The Lord warned Laban, when he was pursuing Jacob, not to speak either good or bad to him. This needs some explanation. Laban was forbidden to say anything that would cause Jacob to change direction, either in the way of reproaches or compliments, to make him turn back. When they met, Laban pointed out that it was in his power to do them harm but he chided Jacob only concerning his gods, which Rachel had secretly taken.

Jacob's Twenty Years of Servitude to Laban Rehearsed

31:36-42 – *"And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, What is my trespass? what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? set it here before my brethren and thy brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand*

didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.”

These 20 years of hard servitude were summed up in verse 41. Ten trials are mentioned several times in Scripture:

- The ten times Laban cheated Jacob (Gen. 31:41).
- There were ten trials for the children of Israel (Num. 14:22).
- There were ten reproaches that Job suffered at the hands of his friends (Job 19:3).
- Daniel and his friends were proved ten days by the servant of the prince of the eunuchs of King Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 1:12-15).
- In a parable, there were ten virgins (typifying Christians in the last days) who are tried (Mt. 25:1-13).
- There were ten days of tribulation for the church in Smyrna to endure (Rev. 2:10). (For further study, please refer to our book entitled *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*.)

Two other significant tens are:

- The ten commandments, which give us God’s standards whereby we are proved (Ex. 20:3-17).
- The ten camels of Abraham’s servant Eliezer speak of walking in obedience to those commandments (Gen. 24:10). It also was a time of proving to make sure that he had the right bride for Isaac.

Thus, for the affliction of Jacob, which God had ordained for his purification, the Lord now awarded him recompense in the form of cattle and menservants in abundance. As with Job, when the captivity was turned, he went out with a plentiful bounty. In the same way, the children of Israel spoiled those who had been their taskmasters when they left Egypt (Ex. 12:34-35).

The Setting Up of the Altar of Agreement

32:43-52 – *“And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born? Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee. And Jacob*

took a stone, and set it up for a pillar. And Jacob said unto his brethren, Gather stones; and they took stones, and made an heap: and they did eat there upon the heap. And Laban called it Jegarsahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed; And Mizpah; for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another. If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee. And Laban said to Jacob, Behold this heap, and behold this pillar, which I have cast betwixt me and thee; This heap be witness, and this pillar be witness, that I will not pass over this heap to thee, and that thou shalt not pass over this heap and this pillar unto me, for harm.”

The whole attitude between Laban and Jacob was deplorable. Their parting ended in an atmosphere of distrust. Laban insisted that they build an altar as would be a covenant to the effect that Jacob would promise to care for the daughters of Laban. A deceitful person trusts no one and is cursed with suspicion. The altar was called Mizpah, *“for he said, The LORD watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.”*

Be careful not to name your church Mizpah, because in Scripture it is a symbol of distrust. Nebo and Pisgah are the places where Moses looked over and saw the land of promise, but was not able to enter (Deut. 34:1-5). Names reveal the destiny of your church. Make sure you have the right name.

31:53-55 – *“The God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge betwixt us. And Jacob sware by the fear of his father Isaac. Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount. And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place.”*

I find the swearing of Jacob to be of particular interest and importance. The fear of our father means we should never dishonour his name by our thoughts, words, or actions. This would be uttermost in our mind. On occasions, when confronted by a choice, the Lord brought before me the face of my own father to strengthen me to make the right choices in life. I believe God will do this for any child to keep him in the right path if the father is righteous as was mine.

Jacob’s Reconciliation with Esau The Encounter with the Angels of God

32:1-2 – *“And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God’s host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.”* Mahanaim means

“double camp” referring to the angel’s company and Jacob’s company. When we go into battle, it is so important that we are sure that the heavenly host is marching in unison with us. This was the case with David, as he went against the Philistines. He was admonished to wait until he heard the footsteps in the mulberry trees, the sound of the heavenly armies going forth with him into battle (2 Sam. 5:23-25).

The Preparation for the Encounter with Esau

32:3-12 – *“And Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother unto the land of Seir, the country of Edom. And he commanded them, saying, Thus shall ye speak unto my lord Esau; Thy servant Jacob saith thus, I have sojourned with Laban, and stayed there until now: And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and womenservants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight. And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”*

How different now was the attitude of Jacob towards Esau. It was almost like the guilty one, Jacob, was being a supplicant before his elder brother. God had broken his spirit and given him a contrite heart. With the news that Esau was approaching with 400 men of war, Jacob turned to God for help. He rehearsed the promises that the Lord made to him at Bethel (Gen. 28:13-19; 31:13), but in so doing he acknowledged his own unworthiness. This indeed is a pattern for us in prayer.

The Presents for Esau

32:13-23 – *“And he lodged there that same night; and took of that which came to his hand a present for Esau his brother; Two hundred she goats, and twenty he goats, two hundred ewes, and twenty rams, Thirty milch camels with their colts, forty kine, and ten bulls, twenty she asses, and ten foals. And he delivered them into the hand of his servants, every drove by themselves; and said*

unto his servants, Pass over before me, and put a space betwixt drove and drove. And he commanded the foremost, saying, When Esau my brother meeteth thee, and asketh thee, saying, Whose art thou? and whither goest thou? and whose are these before thee? Then thou shalt say, They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau: and, behold, also he is behind us. And so commanded he the second, and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, On this manner shall ye speak unto Esau, when ye find him. And say ye moreover, Behold, thy servant Jacob is behind us. For he said, I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me. So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had."

In contemplating the presents that Jacob sent by the hand of his servants we must conclude that Jacob, through the blessing of God, was indeed a very wealthy man. In sending his wives and children over the River Jabbok without him, he was separating himself unto God. Jacob was on the other side of Jabbok, which means "a flowing river." This name was quite appropriate for it would depict the new encounter Jacob was about to have with God.

The Peniel Experience

32:24-32 – *"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank."*

This new experience of meeting God face to face caused the river of God to flow out from his innermost being, as the Lord said in John 7:37-39, "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of

the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” Such encounters with God always cause marvellous, new streams of life to flow in the believer.

Here we see God wrestled with Jacob. This match was very remarkable, since the Lord is in heaven and we are on earth. Therefore, the Lord had to humble Himself, not only to behold the sorry plight of Jacob, but also to actually permit him to touch the Thrice Holy God of heaven and earth.

The *persistence* of Jacob is important to note, since Christ Himself stated in the parable of the unjust judge that the *continual* coming of the widow brought action (Lk. 18:1-8). Likewise, as we cry out to the Lord repeatedly concerning our situations, we shall see Him move on our behalf.

Jacob was so tired of his deceitful nature that he would not let God go until God changed him. We know that the man Jacob was wrestling with was the Lord because he declared in verse 30, “*I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.*” So let us, beloved, become holy wrestlers, like Jacob, who would not let God go until he received his answer.

With this new encounter with God came a change of name from Jacob, “the deceiver,” to Israel, “prince of God.” Likewise, for us there can be a change of name as we overcome (Rev. 2:17). Meeting God face to face (perhaps not in the same manner of Jacob) can be our portion upon this earth, as we see in the beautiful promises made to us by the Lord in John 14:21, “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.”

The Christian faith operates through love; and the measure of one’s love is demonstrated by the extent to which one keeps Christ’s commandments. “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn. 14:23). The Father’s love is conditional; it is based upon our obedience to His Word.

A similar hope is given to us in the sixth beatitude: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God” (Mt. 5:8). Let us therefore cry out as David did in Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

After this experience with God, Jacob became lame because the Lord had touched him in his thigh. Jacob was originally very strong-willed and independent, but from this time onwards he had to depend on the Lord. This dependency upon the Lord is also seen in the Song of Solomon 8:5, “Who

is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?” Certainly, the purpose of the wilderness is to bring us to that place of holy dependence upon our Beloved. Also, Isaiah 33:23 is a wonderful promise to those who are so afflicted. It declares: “the lame take the prey.” This verse implies that those who have been weakened by God can win the battle and obtain the spoils.

The Meeting with Esau

33:1-4 – *“And Jacob lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, Esau came, and with him four hundred men. And he divided the children unto Leah, and unto Rachel, and unto the two handmaids. And he put the handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost. And he passed over before them, and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him: and they wept.”*

In going to meet Esau, Jacob placed his family in the reverse order of importance in his heart, sending the handmaids with their children first, followed by Leah, and then his beloved Rachel. As he was unsure of the reception that he would receive at the hands of his elder twin, Jacob sent them as a peace offering unto Esau.

When a man’s ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him (Prov. 16:7). Therefore, when Esau came near, Jacob bowed seven times before his brother in a sign of abject servility. As we have afore mentioned, the Lord had accomplished much in the heart of this self-willed yet pious man during those 20 years of servitude under Laban’s deceitful hand.

33:5-11 – *“And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, Who are those with thee? And he said, The children which God hath graciously given thy servant. Then the handmaidens came near, they and their children, and they bowed themselves. And Leah also with her children came near, and bowed themselves: and after came Joseph near and Rachel, and they bowed themselves. And he said, What meanest thou by all this drove which I met? And he said, These are to find grace in the sight of my lord. And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself. And Jacob said, Nay, I pray thee, if now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand: for therefore I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me. Take, I pray thee, my blessing that is brought to thee; because God hath dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough. And he urged him, and he took it.”*

Esau’s attitude was now no longer one of hatred and vengeance but rather one of brokenness at this meeting with his twin. Disclaiming the necessity of the offerings that Jacob had proffered him,

Esau exclaimed that he had enough. This too is of importance, because the Lord had fulfilled the prophecy in part that Isaac had pronounced over him in that He had blessed Esau materially, but alas, not spiritually. Therefore, there is a sense of *satisfaction* on the part of Esau similar to that expressed by the Laodiceans when they were saying to their detriment, “I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17). Regretfully, like Esau, they knew not that they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. Esau was happy and content with his material prosperity.

33:12-15 – *“And he said, Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee. And he said unto him, My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and herds with young are with me: and if men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead on softly, according as the cattle that goeth before me and the children be able to endure, until I come unto my lord unto Seir. And Esau said, Let me now leave with thee some of the folk that are with me. And he said, What needeth it? let me find grace in the sight of my lord.”*

The two brothers parted, but not before another truth warrants our notice. Esau proposed: *“Let us take our journey, and let us go, and I will go before thee.”* *I will go before thee* is better rendered “I will go near or alongside thee.” Jacob refused on the grounds that the young could be overdriven. Jacob desired that Esau went his way while he would lead on *softly*. This is indicative of the heart of a true shepherd who cares for the state of his flock. Also, there is the thought of not wishing to keep company or be dependent upon the profane or ungodly (such as Esau).

The Parting of the Ways

33:16 – *“So Esau returned that day on his way unto Seir.”* Esau returned to his inheritance on the other side of Jordan to Seir. The land of Seir and Mount Seir are alternate names for the region occupied by the descendants of Esau (or Edom). It was a mountainous and extremely rugged country, about 100 miles in length. Parts of the range are almost impassable. The highest peak is about 5,600 feet above sea level.

33:17 – *“And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him an house, and made booths for his cattle: therefore the name of the place is called Succoth.”* Jacob then journeyed to and dwelt in Succoth, whose name meant “booths.” It was a city east of the Jordan that later became the tribal territory of Gad. It was an important town during the time of Gideon. Gideon punished its leaders for not helping him in a campaign against the Midianites (Jdg. 8:5-7, 13-16). King Hiram made vessels for Solomon’s Temple near Succoth many years later (1 Ki. 7:45-46).

33:18 – *“And Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padanaram; and pitched his tent before the city.”* Then he travelled on to Shalem, whose name meant “peace, or safety,” according to translation (compare NIV text note). It is in the study of these towns that we understand the spiritual progress of Jacob. Here is a place of peace and safety that he had entered into spiritually after all his years of hard labour. Gone now is the fear of the consequences that had awaited him because of his past misdemeanours with respect to Esau (in stealing the blessing).

33:19-20 – *“And he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem’s father, for an hundred pieces of money. And he erected there an altar, and called it Elelohe-Israel.”* He bought a parcel of land for 100 pieces of money, typifying the fruitfulness of a hundred fold Christian. In building the altar, he was acknowledging the God of Israel who so graciously had given him peace and rest from all his labours.

The Defilement of Dinah

Chapter 34 is self-explanatory and illustrates the brotherly horror at the immorality of a sister who had acted in a fashion little better than a harlot. This incidentally portrays the true feelings of God with respect to sexual purity. In our adulterous generation so many feel that sexual liaisons outside of marriage are acceptable, but God is holy and so we should be holy. We must be faithful to Him in these matters. Remember the admonition of the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

34:1-6 – *“And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her, and lay with her, and defiled her. And his soul clave unto Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and spake kindly unto the damsel. And Shechem spake unto his father Hamor, saying, Get me this damsel to wife. And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter: now his sons were with his cattle in the field: and Jacob held his peace until they were come. And Hamor the father of Shechem went out unto Jacob to commune with him.”*

It is so dangerous when young people despise parental rules. So often moral sin is rooted in *rebellion*. Dinah removed herself from the protection of her father’s house and started worldly friendships. Being with the wrong friends, she found herself in the wrong places. Then she met Shechem, the son of the prince of that area. Shechem seduced Dinah into sexual sin and wanted to marry her.

34:7-12 – *“And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob’s*

daughter; which thing ought not to be done. And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife. And make ye marriages with us, and give your daughters unto us, and take our daughters unto you. And ye shall dwell with us: and the land shall be before you; dwell and trade ye therein, and get you possessions therein. And Shechem said unto her father and unto her brethren, Let me find grace in your eyes, and what ye shall say unto me I will give. Ask me never so much dowry and gift, and I will give according as ye shall say unto me: but give me the damsel to wife.”

When Dinah’s brothers learned of this affair, they were grieved and very wroth. Hamor, the young man’s father, came to Jacob to talk about the possibility of having her for his daughter-in-law, and offered as much dowry or presents as Jacob required.

34:13-24 – *“And the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father deceitfully, and said, because he had defiled Dinah their sister: And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor’s son. And the young man deferred not to do the thing, because he had delight in Jacob’s daughter: and he was more honourable than all the house of his father. And Hamor and Shechem his son came unto the gate of their city, and communed with the men of their city, saying, These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for the land, behold, it is large enough for them; let us take their daughters to us for wives, and let us give them our daughters. Only herein will the men consent unto us for to dwell with us, to be one people, if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. Shall not their cattle and their substance and every beast of theirs be ours? only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us. And unto Hamor and unto Shechem his son hearkened all that went out of the gate of his city; and every male was circumcised, all that went out of the gate of his city.”*

Her brothers spoke up and answered Hamor and Shechem with guile. Jacob’s sons were filled with deceit, just as Jacob had been as a young man. He was reaping what he had sown. The brothers told Hamor and Shechem that it was not customary to see their sister marry and dwell among those who were uncircumcised. Thus, they and the whole village consented to circumcision.

34:25-29 – *“And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah’s brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city*

boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house.” After the whole city was circumcised, on the third day when they were still sore, Simeon and Levi came boldly with swords and slew all the men of the city. After retrieving Dinah, they completely spoiled all of the wealth of the city.

Later when Jacob was prophesying over his 12 sons, he remembered what Simeon and Levi had done. He prophesied that Simeon and Levi were men of anger and self-will, and that they would be divided and scattered in the land (Gen. 49:5-7). These two tribes were never given any certain dwelling place of their own in the land. Levi was scattered throughout the 12 tribes, and Simeon found refuge mainly in the land of Judah.

34:30-31 – *“And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?”* After the treachery of Simeon and Levi, Jacob feared that the other inhabitants of the land (which greatly outnumbered them) would take vengeance and destroy them.

This is the trouble that came to the house of Israel because of a wayward daughter, it started with rebellion and walking with worldly friends. Then she fell into sin. This provoked her brothers who committed mass murders. Then the whole family had to relocate. One sin leads to another. Oh, the wretchedness of rebellion and disobedience!

Divine Direction for Jacob

35:1-4 – *“And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem.”*

The steps of Jacob, as we have already stated, are filled with spiritual significance for our own lives. After a time of peace (which was interrupted by the actions of Simeon and Levi), God directed Jacob to move to Bethel, “the house of God.” In so doing Jacob calls upon all of his household to make an act of consecration in the putting away of all strange gods, and to change their spiritual garments.

As Christians, we can have many strange gods, even though we may not recognise them as such; and they must be removed. These gods were buried under the oak in Shechem. It was at this very place that Joshua later confirmed the covenant between Israel and God. “So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day, and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem. And Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak, that was [sacred to] the LORD” (Josh. 24:25-26).

35:5 – *“And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob.”* The Lord protected Jacob’s journey to Bethel (after the massacre of Hamor and those of his city) by causing His fear to fall upon the inhabitants of the surrounding cities so that they would not touch Jacob. The fear of the Lord is an anointing. It is one of the seven Spirits of the Lord (Isa. 11:2). When we put away the strange gods, and let God change our spiritual garments, He fights for us and places His terror upon our enemies.

35:6-8 – *“So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan, that is, Bethel, he and all the people that were with him. And he built there an altar, and called the place Elbethel: because there God appeared unto him, when he fled from the face of his brother. But Deborah Rebekah’s nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak: and the name of it was called Allonbachuth.”* The death of Rachel’s nurse Deborah is recorded here. The naming of her burial place, Allon-bachuth (“the oak of mourning”) suggests the family of Jacob held her in very high esteem. Many years later, the prophetess Deborah judged Israel in the same area (Jdg. 4:4-5).

The Appearance of God Again to Jacob

35:9-15 – *“And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padanaram, and blessed him. And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel. And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; And the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land. And God went up from him in the place where he talked with him. And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he*

poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon. And Jacob called the name of the place where God spake with him, Bethel.”

The Lord reiterates His promises to Jacob upon his act of consecration. Not only does Jacob have a new name (Israel, meaning “prince of God”), but he also has God’s assurance that the land promised to Abraham would be his for an inheritance. Jacob named the place Bethel, meaning “the house of God.”

The Death of Rachel in Birth Pangs

35:16-20 – *“And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day.”*

Rachel died giving birth to her second son. She had prophesied of the birth of another son when Joseph was born, saying, “God shall add to me another son” (Gen. 30:24). Jacob named her second son Benjamin, meaning “the son of his right arm.” Jacob changed the name of the baby so as to bring about victory. Jesus, who was the Son of sorrow, is now seated at the right hand of God.

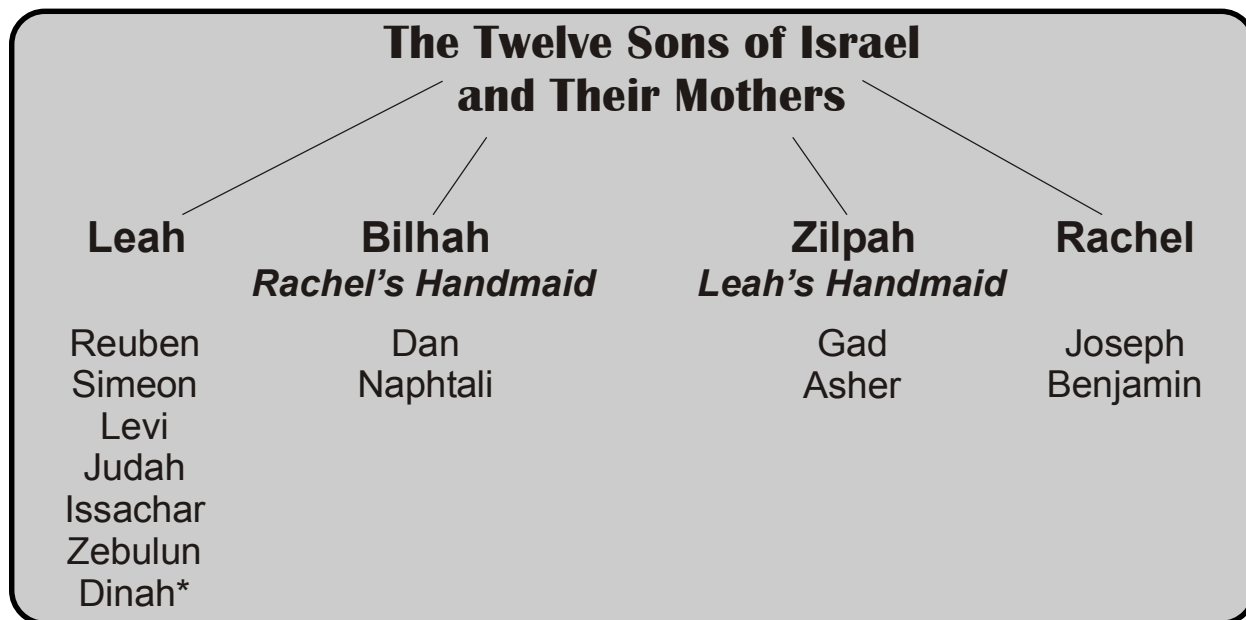
Rachel’s grave may still be seen today just as one enters Bethlehem. Rachel’s son Joseph gave bread to starving Egypt. And Jesus Christ who is named “The Bread of Life” was born only 300 yards from where Rachel is buried in Bethlehem.

The Incest of Reuben

35:21-22 – *“And Israel journeyed, and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar. And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve.”* Reuben’s act of incest with a concubine of his father Jacob cost him the loss of his birthright. The right of the firstborn was Reuben’s, but it was later given to Joseph (1 Chr. 5:1-2).

Moral impurity produces instability (Gen. 49:3-4). Reuben never excelled because of moral instability. His birthright was given to the two sons of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). Judah

prevailed to carry on the Messianic line. Incest and moral impurity of any kind must be thoroughly repented of and cleansed or we could lose our birthright, and even our soul.



The Death of Isaac

35:23-29 – *“The sons of Leah; Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn, and Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Zebulun: The sons of Rachel; Joseph, and Benjamin: And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: And the sons of Zilpah, Leah’s handmaid; Gad, and Asher: these are the sons of Jacob, which were born to him in Padanaram. And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. And the days of Isaac were an hundred and fourscore years. And Isaac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.”*

At the death of the patriarch Isaac, his sons Jacob and Esau were united again, which so often happens at the death of parents. He was buried in Hebron, next to Abraham and Sarah. As we stated earlier, bear in mind that Genesis is not in perfect chronological order, for though we have the record of Isaac’s death here, he was actually still alive during the time Joseph was in Egypt.

The Generations of Esau

36:1-30 – *“Now these are the generations of Esau, who is Edom. Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; And Bashemath Ishmael’s daughter, sister of Nebajoth. And Adah bare to Esau*

Eliphaz; and Bashemath bare Reuel; And Aholibamah bare Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah: these are the sons of Esau, which were born unto him in the land of Canaan. And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance, which he had got in the land of Canaan; and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob. For their riches were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in mount Seir: Esau is Edom. And these are the generations of Esau the father of the Edomites in mount Seir: These are the names of Esau's sons; Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, Reuel the son of Bashemath the wife of Esau. And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, Zepho, and Gatam, and Kenaz. And Timna was concubine to Eliphaz Esau's son; and she bare to Eliphaz Amalek: these were the sons of Adah Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Reuel; Nahath, and Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah: these were the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these were the sons of Aholibamah, the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon, Esau's wife: and she bare to Esau Jeush, and Jaalam, and Korah. These were dukes of the sons of Esau: the sons of Eliphaz the firstborn son of Esau; duke Teman, duke Omar, duke Zepho, duke Kenaz, Duke Korah, duke Gatam, and duke Amalek: these are the dukes that came of Eliphaz in the land of Edom; these were the sons of Adah. And these are the sons of Reuel Esau's son; duke Nahath, duke Zerah, duke Shammah, duke Mizzah: these are the dukes that came of Reuel in the land of Edom; these are the sons of Bashemath Esau's wife. And these are the sons of Aholibamah Esau's wife; duke Jeush, duke Jaalam, duke Korah: these were the dukes that came of Aholibamah the daughter of Anah, Esau's wife. These are the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these are their dukes. These are the sons of Seir the Horite, who inhabited the land; Lotan, and Shobal, and Zibeon, and Anah, And Dishon, and Ezer, and Dishan: these are the dukes of the Horites, the children of Seir in the land of Edom. And the children of Lotan were Hori and Hemam; and Lotan's sister was Timna. And the children of Shobal were these; Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father. And the children of Anah were these; Dishon, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah. And these are the children of Dishon; Hemdan, and Eshban, and Ithran, and Cheran. The children of Ezer are these; Bilhan, and Zaavan, and Akan. The children of Dishan are these; Uz, and Aran. These are the dukes that came of the Horites; duke Lotan, duke Shobal, duke Zibeon, duke Anah, Duke Dishon, duke Ezer, duke Dishan: these are the dukes that came of Hori, among their dukes in the land of Seir.”

Esau and Jacob were mightily blessed such that the land could not support them both. Through prosperity, God ensured that the brothers were separated for His purposes, much the same as when He caused the separation of Lot from Abraham. Esau's inheritance was the land of Edom, a little east of Canaan. This land has been a thorn in the side of Israel throughout history (and even unto this very day), as can be seen in many places in Scripture.

36:31-39 – *“And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. And Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom: and the name of his city was Dinhabah. And Bela died, and Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his stead. And Jobab died, and Husham of the land of Temani reigned in his stead. And Husham died, and Hadad the son of Bedad, who smote Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Avith. And Hadad died, and Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his stead. And Samlah died, and Saul of Rehoboth by the river reigned in his stead. And Saul died, and Baalhanan the son of Achbor reigned in his stead. And Baalhanan the son of Achbor died, and Hadar reigned in his stead: and the name of his city was Pau; and his wife’s name was Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.”*

These eight kings mentioned are not succeeded by their sons, and therefore were *elected* (1 Chr. 1:43-50). Whilst this is not important by itself, it is helpful to the interpretation of Hebrews 7:3, “Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.” With respect to King Melchisedec, he was also *elected* and was reigning in Jerusalem during the time of Abraham. He is a type of the New Testament king and priest.

36:40-43 – *“And these are the names of the dukes that came of Esau, according to their families, after their places, by their names; duke Timnah, duke Alvah, duke Jetheth, Duke Aholibamah, duke Elah, duke Pinon, Duke Kenaz, duke Teman, duke Mibzar, Duke Magdiel, duke Iram: these be the dukes of Edom, according to their habitations in the land of their possession: he is Esau the father of the Edomites.”*

The main truth about Esau is that he represents Christians who sell their birthrights. There are spiritual Edomites in the Church. When a Christian sells his birthright, he is vexed with jealousy against those who have not compromised. Often their end is very dismal. King Herod was an Edomite, and tried to kill Christ because he wanted to be king. Many times Edomites (those who have sold their birthrights) build big churches (just as Herod built a large temple), but they lack the holy fire and all of the other spiritual blessings.

PART TEN

The Life of Joseph

37:1 - 50:26

His Early Life

37:1-4 – “*And Jacob dwelt in the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan. These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father’s wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.*”

Joseph has been, throughout all generations, one of the choicest role models to which the young and old alike can turn to for inspiration. He exemplified purity and saintliness, with the virtues of wisdom and strength of purpose that make him one of the most outstanding leaders of men of all times. His mother was Rachel, the favourite wife of Israel. She was one of the seven barren women in Scripture.

At an early age, Jacob signified that Joseph was his favoured son. Therefore, Joseph was his chosen heir, Jacob having given him *a coat of many colours*. This is a very difficult phrase to interpret and many have assumed it to be a coat that was long and with sleeves to the wrists. This coat distinguished him as the heir and caused his brethren to envy and hate him. They could not speak peaceably to him.

Later when Joseph told them his dreams, they plotted his demise. We may think that Jacob was being governed by partiality, but that was not the truth of the matter. Joseph was truly more righteous and worthy than his brethren, and God gave him dreams at a young age, confirming that *the Lord* indeed was the one who had chosen the heir. Joseph was 17 years old. (17 means “perfection of spiritual order.”) God visited Joseph at the perfect time in his life.

The sons of the concubines (Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali) were very evil, and Joseph came and told his father. Joseph was not being a talebearer. It is our responsibility to report evil, and there are times when we are judged for not doing so. This is substantiated in Leviticus 5:1, “And if a soul

sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.”

The Dreams of Joseph

37:5 – *“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more. Joseph’s dream surely did not make his brethren any happier, but again it was God’s confirmation of what Jacob, in giving Joseph the coat to signify his position as heir, was doing. Joseph was going to reign over his brethren, and have pre-eminence over them. Although envy, jealousy, and hatred are not normal feelings for siblings to have towards each other, Joseph grew up in a home of envy, strife, and contention (through the attitude of his mother and aunt).*

37:6-8 – *“And he said unto them, Hear, I pray you, this dream which I have dreamed: For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose, and also stood upright; and, behold, your sheaves stood round about, and made obeisance to my sheaf. And his brethren said to him, Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for his words.”*

The thought of his brothers’ sheaves bowing down to his sheaf was readily interpreted by the brothers themselves that Joseph would reign over them. The fact that it was a sheaf of grain meant that he would have sustenance when they had none, and he would feed them. They would have to come to him for bread. Joseph would have the answers in the time of crisis. A vivid truth in the life of Joseph—It requires *great suffering* to obtain the answers for the complexities of our generation.

Why did Joseph share his dream? Do not forget, he was only 17 years old and, generally speaking, we have to *learn* when to speak and when to refrain. All it did was anger the brethren. There is another point that we have to remember. Not only was Joseph on trial, but also his brethren. There would come a day when they would bow down, and they would remember this day. In actual fact, the dream had to be told as a witness against them, even though it kindled their anger.

37:9-11 – *“And he dreamed yet another dream and told it his brethren, and said, Behold, I have dreamed a dream more; and, behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me. And he told it to his father, and to his brethren: and his father rebuked him, and said unto him, What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth? And his brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying.”*

The second dream (of the sun, moon and the eleven stars), likewise, was interpreted—this time by his father—that he, his mother, and the brothers would all bow down before Joseph. This was all the more remarkable since his mother was already dead. The interpretation meant that he would later nourish his father and brothers in Egypt. The fact that his mother (represented by the moon) would also bow down, could suggest that in heaven Joseph has a greater prominence than his father, his mother, or his brothers. Certainly he had a more sterling character than any of them. It is worthy of note that although the brothers hated him the more, the father, though he rebuked him at first, observed his saying. Jacob was spiritually minded, and as he thought upon the dream, he realised it was from God.

When a dream or vision is repeated, as in the case of Joseph here, it is almost certainly of God, and will quickly come to pass (Gen. 41:32).

Betrayed by His Brethren

37:12-17 – *“And his brethren went to feed their father’s flock in Shechem. And Israel said unto Joseph, Do not thy brethren feed the flock in Shechem? come, and I will send thee unto them. And he said to him, Here am I. And he said to him, Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again. So he sent him out of the vale of Hebron, and he came to Shechem. And a certain man found him, and, behold, he was wandering in the field: and the man asked him, saying, What seekest thou? And he said, I seek my brethren: tell me, I pray thee, where they feed their flocks. And the man said, They are departed hence; for I heard them say, Let us go to Dothan. And Joseph went after his brethren, and found them in Dothan.”*

When sent by his father to inquire of the state of his brethren, he replied, “Here am I.” This is so reminiscent of the beautiful portrayal of Christ that we see in Isaiah 6:8, when the Heavenly Father asked who would go for the heavenly host and save a dying world. Our Lord Jesus responded, “Here am I, send me.”

Unbeknownst to Jacob, he would not see his beloved son again for 22 years. Israel’s household had been dwelling in Hebron. After leaving Hebron, Joseph came to Shechem, and later was directed to Dothan in search of his brethren. He found them in Dothan, which is the place where Elisha had the experience of opening the young man’s eyes to see all the angels who were guarding them (2 Ki. 6:13-17).

37:18-20 – *“And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, they conspired against him to slay him. And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now therefore,*

and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: and we shall see what will become of his dreams.” Joseph was sent at the behest of his father to, in actuality, save a dying world. He, like Christ, was wounded by his own brethren, suffered imprisonment, and then was exalted to become the saviour and nourisher of his people and other nations.

The story unfolds when the brothers saw Joseph come from afar. Their conspiracy to kill Joseph was a direct challenge against God who had given the dreams. The brethren knew the dreams were of God, and they tried to stop their fulfilment. They boasted, “*we will see what will become of his dreams.*” This shows defiance against God. When people fight God, He will give them enough rope to hang themselves.

37:21-28 – *“And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stripped Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. And they sat down to eat bread: and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and, behold, a company of Ishmeelites came from Gilead with their camels bearing spicery and balm and myrrh, going to carry it down to Egypt. And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmeelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.”*

Reuben, the firstborn, moved to protect Joseph and forbade killing him. He suggested that they place him in a pit, determining that at a later time he would deliver Joseph back to his father. Joseph remembered this later on, as we shall see in Genesis chapter 42.

The firstborn had a special place of authority among his brethren. In the absence of the father, the firstborn was the head of the family, and was held in high esteem. However, Reuben apparently left the scene. In the meantime, Judah convinced the other brothers to sell Joseph into the hands of the Ishmaelites for 20 pieces of silver. This is reminiscent of the Saviour, who was betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. In spite of the folly of man, God was using this to bring Joseph down into Egypt to make him a world ruler (Ps. 105:17).

The Ishmaelites carried Joseph as a slave into Egypt. The Ishmaelites went bearing spicery, balm, and myrrh—ingredients used for embalming. The Egyptians were known for embalming because their monuments were those that glorified the dead. The fact that Joseph was carried into Egypt

with these spices indicated that he was going to experience a spiritual death there. He would know the crucified life in Egypt, but would also emerge with tremendous resurrection power. Every injustice was used by God to carry him closer to the throne. It is the same with us. However, if we fight injustices and demand our rights, we will disqualify ourselves from reigning.

37:29-35 – *“And Reuben returned unto the pit; and, behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go? And they took Joseph’s coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; And they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son’s coat or no. And he knew it, and said, It is my son’s coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him.”*

It is not clear if their crime was revealed to Reuben upon his return. At any rate, they deceived their father Jacob by dipping the coat of Joseph in the blood of a kid. Thus, until his latter days when he eventually found out the truth, with respect to Joseph, Jacob was still suffering from the results of his deceitful ways, which had now been manifested through his sons.

It is a solemn thought that we reproduce what we are, especially in the lives of our natural children. It is also a fact that we reproduce our flaws and mentality in our spiritual seed as well. Jacob suffered in his mind for 22 years, thinking his son had been torn to pieces by an evil beast. Much of our suffering is also in the realm of things imagined. May we pray for grace over our imaginations.

37:36 – *“And the Midianites sold him into Egypt unto Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh’s, and captain of the guard.”* Joseph was now sold to Potiphar, a high-ranking official in Pharaoh’s army.

In chapter 38, the account of Joseph’s life is briefly interrupted. The narrative shifts to a shameful episode in Judah’s life. In chapter 39, the narrative of Joseph’s life begins again.

The Offspring of Judah

38:1-30 – *“And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite, whose name was Shuah; and he took her, and went in unto her. And she conceived, and bare a son; and he called his name Er. And she conceived again, and bare a son; and she called his name Onan. And*

she yet again conceived, and bare a son; and called his name Shelah: and he was at Chezib, when she bare him. And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also. Then said Judah to Tamar his daughter in law, Remain a widow at thy father's house, till Shelah my son be grown: for he said, Lest peradventure he die also, as his brethren did. And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house. And in process of time the daughter of Shuah Judah's wife died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheepshearers to Timnath, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. And it was told Tamar, saying, Behold thy father in law goeth up to Timnath to shear his sheep. And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife. When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him. And she arose, and went away, and laid by her veil from her, and put on the garments of her widowhood. And Judah sent the kid by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive his pledge from the woman's hand: but he found her not. Then he asked the men of that place, saying, Where is the harlot, that was openly by the way side? And they said, There was no harlot in this place. And he returned to Judah, and said, I cannot find her; and also the men of the place said, that there was no harlot in this place. And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be shamed: behold, I sent this kid, and thou hast not found her. And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more. And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah."

This is a very sordid account of the birth of twin sons to Judah by Tamar, his daughter-in-law. One of these twins was Pharez, who came into the Messianic line (Mt. 1:3, Lk. 3:33). It simply shows that in spite of all our sin, the Lord can bring forth something beautiful. Nonetheless, it is not the way to live.

In this instance, Joseph should be our example, not Judah, albeit eventually the line of Joseph was refused and Judah prevailed over his brethren (1 Chr. 5:2). Christ came from the line of Judah (Rev. 5:5). Therefore, we can see as we study Christ's blood lineage all the sinful nature it contained. In spite of all this, He received grace to triumph over its weaknesses and became the spotless Lamb of God. From this account we are given hope that we, too, can triumph over the fallen nature that we have received, by the power of the Holy Spirit and His grace. Amen.

Joseph in Potiphar's House

39:1-6 – *“And Joseph was brought down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him of the hands of the Ishmeelites, which had brought him down thither. And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured.”*

Bought as a slave by Potiphar, captain of Pharaoh's guard, Joseph epitomised the proverb that says, “A wise servant shall have rule over a son that causeth shame, and shall have part of the inheritance among the brethren” (Prov. 17:2). Certainly Joseph had total control over all the household of Potiphar and was in a position of complete trust. God was grooming him for a much higher position of stewardship. As with all things in life, we should not despise the day of small beginnings. We are first proved in the smaller issues of life. If we are faithful in the little things, God will make us ruler over much (Mt. 25:14-30).

The Lord was with Joseph, and although he was in exile in a strange land, the anointing of the Lord was upon him, and he was prospering. When we are in a trial, the anointing can still be upon us. Joseph was learning to be in authority over men, even during a long, hard trial. Joseph is one of the brightest stars in the Word of God, proving that no matter what our circumstances, we can rise above our environment, and rise above sin.

Verse 6 tells us that he was a very handsome man. At this time he was probably around 22-24 years old. Now he was further tested by temptation. His brethren had all failed, and now Joseph had to be tested. If we desire to be deliverers in our generation, we will have to be sorely tested.

Joseph Tempted by Potiphar's Wife

39:7-13 – *“And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day, that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth.”*

Sin begins with the eyes and thoughts. This form of temptation is common to men, and it behoves us to take all reasonable precautions against a fall. Numerous are the warnings in the book of Proverbs concerning strange women, who have caused even strong men to be cast down into hell. Many of these women are married women.

Day by day, she spoke to Joseph. It was a constant wearing, similar to that of Delilah with Samson (Jdg. 16:16-17). Joseph was stronger spiritually than Samson; thus, he was wiser. He avoided temptation and ran from it. Samson stayed around and fell. Joseph did not stand there rebuking the devil. *He got out.* There are practical measures we can take to keep ourselves pure. We must stay away from situations where we are extremely susceptible to temptation.

The Accusation

39:14-18 – *“That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying, See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out. And she laid up his garment by her, until his lord came home. And she spake unto him according to these words, saying, The Hebrew servant, which thou hast brought unto us, came in unto me to mock me: And it came to pass, as I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled out.”*

One fact that should be noted is that none of the men of the house were inside. Thus, Joseph was vulnerable, not only to the advances of Potiphar's wife, but also to the false accusations that followed. This resulted in a prison experience. For taking a stand for purity, he is now accused of impurity.

I firmly believe that false accusations and spiritual prison experiences, of one degree or another, are in the plan of God for all His precious saints. They develop the enduring qualities of meekness and faith, which are essential qualities for leadership. Actually, there are no other ways to develop these qualities. Therefore, let us understand God's ways, as the prophet Isaiah brings out, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

39:19-20 – *“And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison.”* Potiphar's wrath was kindled when he heard the accusation of his wife against Joseph. Potiphar's wife ruined Joseph's immaculate reputation; thus, he was cast into prison. Usually a man in this situation would have been executed. He did not try to defend himself. God was his defense and his lawyer.

Joseph in the Prison House

39:21-23 – *“But the LORD was with Joseph, and showed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.”* Irrespective of where we are, the Lord is with us (Ps. 139:7-12).

Joseph had descended into an even deeper trial; yet, God was with Joseph and gave him favour in the eyes of the keeper of the prison. God does not waste time. Joseph was continuing his training for administration by having the oversight of all the prisoners. He was being equipped for the task that lay ahead, namely, to become the governor over all of Egypt. Each trial is getting deeper and longer, yet the Lord was with Joseph, and everything he did prospered.

Psalm 105:17-19 sheds more light on Joseph's time in this prison or dungeon, “He sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant. Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron. Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.”

Joseph's time in the dungeon *was extremely difficult*. His heart must have been in confusion. Part of the time he was bound in iron. The original Hebrew brings out that his soul was laid in iron, or iron was put into his soul. God developed enormous strength and iron in the soul and character of Joseph during these long and extremely difficult years. He was there for about seven years. The men and women who have passed through spiritual captivity are the ones who do not fail. All of Joseph's other brothers failed; they did not go into captivity.

"The word of the Lord tried him." Joseph started out at the age of 17 with marvellous dreams of rulership. He was the heir with the coat of many colours. After these mountaintop experiences, everything went wrong. His own brothers hated him, and plotted his murder. After their betrayal, he was sold as a slave into a foreign land. Joseph was denied the privilege of saying goodbye to his father, and his father had no idea what had befallen him. After a season of fruitfulness in the house of Potiphar, he was then accused of adultery and was swiftly thrown into the dungeon. Years were slowly going by. One injustice after another was hurled at this innocent man.

The word of the Lord was *testing* him. Every one of these injustices was ordained of God to purify and promote him (Gen. 45:5-8). Joseph continued to believe and cherish the dreams he had received many years before. His faith was being purified as gold. Joseph became a very important man in his generation after he passed his tests. Oftentimes we do not understand how high the stakes are today for us as believers.

The Interpretation of the Butler and Baker's Dreams

40:1-23 – *"And it came to pass after these things, that the butler of the king of Egypt and his baker had offended their lord the king of Egypt. And Pharaoh was wroth against two of his officers, against the chief of the butlers, and against the chief of the bakers. And he put them in ward in the house of the captain of the guard, into the prison, the place where Joseph was bound. And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them: and they continued a season in ward. And they dreamed a dream both of them, each man his dream in one night, each man according to the interpretation of his dream, the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, which were bound in the prison. And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? And they said unto him, We have dreamed a dream, and there is no interpreter of it. And Joseph said unto them, Do not interpretations belong to God? tell me them, I pray you. And the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, In my dream, behold, a vine was before me; And in the vine were three branches: and it was as though it budded, and her blossoms shot forth; and the clusters thereof brought forth ripe grapes: And Pharaoh's cup was in my hand: and I took the grapes, and pressed them*

into Pharaoh's cup, and I gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand. And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler. But think on me when it shall be well with thee, and show kindness, I pray thee, unto me, and make mention of me unto Pharaoh, and bring me out of this house: For indeed I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews: and here also have I done nothing that they should put me into the dungeon. When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said unto Joseph, I also was in my dream, and, behold, I had three white baskets on my head: And in the uppermost basket there was of all manner of bakemeats for Pharaoh; and the birds did eat them out of the basket upon my head. And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days: Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree; and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee. And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. And he restored the chief butler unto his butlership again; and he gave the cup into Pharaoh's hand: But he hanged the chief baker: as Joseph had interpreted to them. Yet did not the chief butler remember Joseph, but forgot him."

The years were slowly dragging on. Joseph was now 28 years old. We see how two trusted servants had offended their lord, Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They had been placed in the prison house; and Joseph, who was in bonds, was entrusted with serving them. The fact that he served them indicates that they held higher positions than he did. On the same night, both the butler and baker had dreams to which God gave Joseph the interpretations. It is obvious that the anointing to interpret dreams was flowing well in the life of Joseph. The butler was to be restored to his position in three days, while the baker was to be hanged in three days.

Joseph pleaded his cause before the butler and asserted his innocence. He besought him to intervene on his behalf before Pharaoh when he was restored. However, deliverance is from the Lord and in His time. When he was restored, the butler forgot Joseph, for in the purposes of God, there was to be a far greater deliverance. If only we will wait for God's timing and let Him do it in His way, we shall see His glory (Isa. 64:4). God wanted Joseph to wait two more years. Joseph had his hopes up, only to be discouraged again; but God had something far better in mind. We must remember this account in Joseph's life.

Pharaoh's Dream

41:1-8 – *"And it came to pass at the end of two full years, that Pharaoh dreamed: and, behold, he stood by the river. And, behold, there came up out of the river seven well favoured kine and*

fatfleshed; and they fed in a meadow. And, behold, seven other kine came up after them out of the river, ill favoured and leanfleshed; and stood by the other kine upon the brink of the river. And the ill favoured and leanfleshed kine did eat up the seven well favoured and fat kine. So Pharaoh awoke. And he slept and dreamed the second time: and, behold, seven ears of corn came up upon one stalk, rank and good. And, behold, seven thin ears and blasted with the east wind sprung up after them. And the seven thin ears devoured the seven rank and full ears. And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream. And it came to pass in the morning that his spirit was troubled; and he sent and called for all the magicians of Egypt, and all the wise men thereof: and Pharaoh told them his dream; but there was none that could interpret them unto Pharaoh.”

As with Nebuchadnezzar in the days of Daniel, God gave a dream to Pharaoh. Through these dreams, the kings elevated God’s chosen servants into places of prominence, power and influence. God gave these dreams for His divine purposes. Both sets of dreams dealt with matters of state.

Nebuchadnezzar, who dreamed of the great image, was given understanding of the successive kingdoms of this world—Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, and the ten kingdoms of the last days, culminating in the kingdom of Christ.

Pharaoh’s dream concerned the immediate 14 years (comprising two sets of seven years), which also have application to the last 14 years before the return of the Lord (of which we will speak later). With respect to the dreams of Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar, their wise men (or the magicians, as they were called) could not interpret them.

The Butler Remembers Joseph

41:9-13 – *“Then spake the chief butler unto Pharaoh, saying, I do remember my faults this day: Pharaoh was wroth with his servants, and put me in ward in the captain of the guard’s house, both me and the chief baker: And we dreamed a dream in one night, I and he; we dreamed each man according to the interpretation of his dream. And there was there with us a young man, an Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard; and we told him, and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he did interpret. And it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was; me he restored unto mine office, and him he hanged.”*

At the right time (in the fullness of God’s time), the butler remembered Joseph. God has His timetable. So often we are prone to imagine that God is late, and that He has delayed His Coming. But no, He is precisely on time. This additional period of two years may be likened to the quiver experience of Isaiah 49:2, where Christ is compared to an arrow in the hand of the Almighty.

Having been made that polished shaft in the hand of the Heavenly Father, He was then placed in a quiver. This signified that He was ready before the Father's appointed time. At the precise time, Christ was to be shot forth on His course.

The Lord's course started at the Jordan River, when He was baptised. The mark for His life was the cross of Calvary. This "quiver experience" (or waiting time) for Christ must have been approximately two years, since we know Joseph's two years were a type of what the Lord would experience. Joseph was obliged to endure those two years until God gave Pharaoh the two dreams of the seven fat cattle and the lean cattle, as well as the seven full ears of corn and the seven lean ones.

The Lord explained this period of additional waiting to me in the following way when I was in New Zealand a number of years ago. There, on a sheep farm, the owner (who was a Christian) told me that sheep must be corralled for a few days before slaughter so that their flesh might be tenderised. Therefore, this quiver time of two years for Joseph, and probably the same time for the Lord Himself, was to tenderise, mellow, and soften their spirits before they entered into their ministry.

Numerical Signification in Joseph's Life

Joseph was 17 when he was betrayed and sold into Egypt. He was 30 when he came to the throne. Thirty is the number of "divine service." Joseph spent 13 years being tested in Egypt; 13 speaks of rebellion, but can also represent "atonement." Joseph was bearing the burdens of others. He was dying so that he might give life to his brethren. The butler forgot Joseph because at that point, Joseph had only been there 11 (means "incomplete") years. It was not the right time. Eleven also means "confusion" and shows the state of Joseph. The Word of the Lord was his only resting place. (See chart on page 71 for further details on scriptural numerics).

Joseph Before Pharaoh

Joseph's life was one of extreme ups and downs. Suddenly, his deep captivity ended. God may show you something of His purposes for your life, after which years go on and you experience many valleys and mountains. Then, suddenly, God brings you right into the centre of His purposes. Joseph was summoned *hastily* from the dungeon to the king's throne. Joseph, who wore a beard as a Hebrew, shaved, since the rulers of Egypt at that time were clean-shaven. This was to conform to the customs of the land, as Paul so admonished us in Romans 13:7, to give respect to whom respect is due. When we are missionaries, we have to follow the customs of the people.

41:14-16 – *“Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they brought him hastily out of the dungeon: and he shaved himself, and changed his raiment, and came in unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard say of thee, that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it. And Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.”*

Joseph was summoned into the king’s palace because of his gift of interpretation. Proverbs 18:16 says, “A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.” Our gift will open many doors for us when we are ready. Joseph acknowledged that the answer was not in him. Joseph had given several previous interpretations (chapter 40), but when he came face to face with a great problem, he acknowledged that it was God who had the power of interpretation, not he himself. We should beware of familiarity with the spiritual gifts and not be presumptuous. We should first seek the mind of the Spirit.

Joseph Interprets the Dream

41:17-36 – *“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, In my dream, behold, I stood upon the bank of the river: And, behold, there came up out of the river seven kine, fatfleshed and well favoured; and they fed in a meadow: And, behold, seven other kine came up after them, poor and very ill favoured and leanfleshed, such as I never saw in all the land of Egypt for badness: And the lean and the ill favoured kine did eat up the first seven fat kine: And when they had eaten them up, it could not be known that they had eaten them; but they were still ill favoured, as at the beginning. So I awoke. And I saw in my dream, and, behold, seven ears came up in one stalk, full and good: And, behold, seven ears, withered, thin, and blasted with the east wind, sprung up after them: And the thin ears devoured the seven good ears: and I told this unto the magicians; but there was none that could declare it to me. And Joseph said unto Pharaoh, The dream of Pharaoh is one: God hath showed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill favoured kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine. This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: What God is about to do he showeth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt: And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land; And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass. Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of*

the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.”

Pharaoh recounts the two dreams. Then, giving all the glory to God, Joseph gives the divine interpretation. He stated that the two dreams were one and because the revelation had been repeated, it was established by God. This is a divine principle, which aids us in determining the Lord’s will.

Thus Joseph gives the interpretation of seven years of plenty, followed by seven years of leanness that will consume the fat years. This is also a type of the last days of the Church Age, when there will be seven years of glorious revival followed by the appearance and reign of the Antichrist for the next seven years. Particularly, the Antichrist will have power during the last three-and-a-half years from the time of the setting up of “the abomination that maketh desolate”, which ushers in the Great Tribulation (Dan. 11:31; 12:11). (Please refer to our commentary on *Daniel* for further study.)

The Elevation of Joseph

Not only does Joseph give the interpretation, but he also gives the steps that Egypt must take to ensure that they survive the lean years. They were advised to build storehouses for the surplus corn in the years of plenty to provide food for the lean years ahead. Moreover, they were to set a discreet and wise man over Egypt to maintain these affairs.

41:37-54 – *“And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants. And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is? And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Forasmuch as God hath showed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art: Thou shalt be over my house, and according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnathpaaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt. And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. And in the seven plenteous*

years the earth brought forth by handfuls. And he gathered up all the food of the seven years, which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities: the food of the field, which was round about every city, laid he up in the same. And Joseph gathered corn as the sand of the sea, very much, until he left numbering; for it was without number. And unto Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And the name of the second called he Ephraim: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction. And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread.”

Pharaoh and all his courtiers were astounded at the wisdom of Joseph, and he was promptly promoted to be the governor of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh in power and authority. From this position he oversaw the building of the granaries and then in the years of leanness, the sale of the corn to the needy. It is worthy to note that Joseph did not only nourish the Egyptians, but also all the countries around who likewise suffered from the afflictions of the famine.

Joseph came to the throne at the age of 30, and then he was given a Gentile bride. He is a type of Christ in that he was rejected by his own Jewish brethren, and received a Gentile bride. Joseph is a type of Christ in a multitude of ways.

41:55-57 – *“And when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread: and Pharaoh said unto all the Egyptians, Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do. And the famine was over all the face of the earth: And Joseph opened all the storehouses, and sold unto the Egyptians; and the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt. And all countries came into Egypt to Joseph for to buy corn; because that the famine was so sore in all lands.”* When the famine came, Pharaoh told the people to go to Joseph; he was the man with the answers in the time of world crisis. He was willing to pay the high cost of being a deliverer to his generation.

The Reunion with His Brothers

This account of the brothers coming down into Egypt for food should be prefaced with an explanation of that which the Lord had most graciously accomplished in the heart and mind of Joseph. This work of grace is revealed in the names that he gave to his two sons.

Manasseh, the firstborn, means “forgetting.” It represents “holy forgetfulness” in the sense that God had caused Joseph to forget all the affliction of his father’s house (Gen. 41:51). For Joseph it

meant that God had caused him to forget all the sadness and bitterness and suffering of those 13 years. His second born, Ephraim, means “fruitful” (Gen 41:52). Ephraim represents double fruitfulness, which came after triumphing over the afflictions, hatred, and persecution, which Joseph had experienced at the hands of his own brethren.

Before we can be fruitful in the Christian life, we must ask God for grace to forget all the things that have been done against us. Thus when Joseph met his brothers after 22 years of separation, he was able to show forth forbearance and forgiveness. Joseph was able, without malice, to receive them and test them to see if they had truly repented of their sins. There is no forgiveness unless one acknowledges his sin.

Joseph Recognises His Brethren

42:1-8 – *“Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; that we may live, and not die. And Joseph’s ten brethren went down to buy corn in Egypt. But Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, Jacob sent not with his brethren; for he said, Lest peradventure mischief befall him. And the sons of Israel came to buy corn among those that came: for the famine was in the land of Canaan. And Joseph was the governor over the land, and he it was that sold to all the people of the land: and Joseph’s brethren came, and bowed down themselves before him with their faces to the earth. And Joseph saw his brethren, and he knew them, but made himself strange unto them, and spake roughly unto them; and he said unto them, Whence come ye? And they said, From the land of Canaan to buy food. And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him.”*

The descent of the brothers of Joseph into Egypt was occasioned by the God-ordained famine that caused Jacob to send his sons into Egypt to buy food. Ten sons were sent but Jacob kept Benjamin, the second son of Rachel and full-blooded brother of Joseph at home, for fear that some misadventure would beset him. Upon entering into the presence of the governor of the land of Egypt, the brothers bowed with their faces to the ground. They failed to recognise Joseph, but he knew them.

Joseph Tests Them to See if They Are Repentant

42:9-10 – *“And Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them, and said unto them, Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said unto him, Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come.”* It was at this precise moment that Joseph remembered the dreams, and he began to speak harshly to them and became as a stranger to them. The path of

reconciliation lies in a valley of humiliation and severe testings. One cannot reconcile with just a few sweet words. Reconciliation means the rejoining of hearts and minds in joyful unison. Therefore a work of grace has to be accomplished in the hearts and lives of those whose fellowship has been rent asunder by sin.

A deep work of repentance (meaning a change in one's thoughts, attitudes and lifestyle) has to be wrought out in the beings of both parties. For Joseph, that meant sweet forgiveness, reasonableness, and understanding had been worked out in his life, concerning that which had provoked the acts of hatred, envy, and jealousy on the part of his brethren. In the hearts of his brethren, a brokenness, contriteness, and godly remorsefulness, had to pervade the whole of their beings because of their sinfulness.

Often people are so quick to ask why Joseph did not say, "My dear brethren, I forgive you." However, there are two sides to forgiveness. In this case, we see Joseph's side and the brethren's side. Joseph had nothing in his heart, but his brethren still had to be reconciled to Joseph, and they needed to have a work done in their hearts. There are two sides to reconciliation. God is willing for everyone to be saved, but not everyone is willing to be saved or to repent for offending God.

You Are Spies!

42:11-17 – *"We are all one man's sons; we are true men, thy servants are no spies. And he said unto them, Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come. And they said, Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not. And Joseph said unto them, That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies: Hereby ye shall be proved: By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison, that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you: or else by the life of Pharaoh surely ye are spies. And he put them all together into ward three days."*

We see the methods that Joseph adopted to induce that awareness of their sinful past, to now trouble their conscience. First, he declared that they were spies that they might know and feel the pain of unjust accusations to which he himself had been subjected. To justify themselves, they declared their origins to be in the land of Canaan and the fact that they were 12 brethren, the youngest being at home and one who was not.

Joseph pretended not to believe them, and put them in prison with the understanding that they would remain there until one of them returned with the youngest brother. As they thought a long

period of imprisonment awaited them, the brethren's hearts had already been softened by the time they were brought out within three days (Gen. 42:18-20). Their hearts must already have been convicted by Joseph's remark that because he feared God, he could not keep them in prison, but they (with the exception of one of the brothers) would be allowed to return and bring the youngest brother down as proof of their sincerity.

42:18-23 – *“And Joseph said unto them the third day, This do, and live; for I fear God: If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison: go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses: But bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die. And they did so. And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.”*

Now the brothers, in front of Joseph (but unaware that he is able to understand them), begin to recriminate one another concerning their previous treatment of Joseph when they placed him in the pit. They associate all too readily their present plight with divine retribution with respect to their cruelty toward their brother.

From their conversations, it was made clear to Joseph that Reuben, the eldest, whilst present with the brethren, had not had any intention of harming Joseph and desired only to fulfil the duties of the firstborn by protecting him from their evil plotting. He, therefore, was exonerated from all blame.

42:24 – *“And he turned himself about from them, and wept; and returned to them again, and communed with them, and took from them Simeon, and bound him before their eyes.”* The second born, Simeon, should thus have assumed the duties of the first born in the absence of Reuben and protected Joseph from the pit. He failed to perform his duties; therefore, he was bound by Joseph and placed in prison to await the return of the brothers. Thus with poetic justice Simeon suffered for his sins.

42:25-28 – *“Then Joseph commanded to fill their sacks with corn, and to restore every man's money into his sack, and to give them provision for the way: and thus did he unto them. And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence. And as one of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it was in his sack's mouth. And he said unto his brethren, My money is restored; and, lo, it is even in my sack: and their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, What is this that God hath done unto us?”*

At the inn en route for home, one of the brothers discovered that his money had been restored to him. Instead of producing joy, Scripture tells us *“their hearts failed them,”* for they could sense with deep foreboding that the time of reckoning had arrived when God would require that which was past. This event caused these men to see the hand of the Almighty.

42:29-38 – *“And they came unto Jacob their father unto the land of Canaan, and told him all that befell unto them; saying, The man, who is the lord of the land, spake roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. And we said unto him, We are true men; we are no spies: We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the youngest is this day with our father in the land of Canaan. And the man, the lord of the country, said unto us, Hereby shall I know that ye are true men; leave one of your brethren here with me, and take food for the famine of your households, and be gone: And bring your youngest brother unto me: then shall I know that ye are no spies, but that ye are true men: so will I deliver you your brother, and ye shall traffic in the land. And it came to pass as they emptied their sacks, that, behold, every man’s bundle of money was in his sack: and when both they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me. And Reuben spake unto his father, saying, Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again. And he said, My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.”*

Upon the return of the brothers to their father (Simeon being left in prison in Egypt), Jacob again suffered, in a sense, from his own deceitfulness that was manifested in the lives of his sons. When they opened their grain sacks, all of them had their money returned to them, and they were very afraid. They told their father that unless Benjamin came down with them, Simeon would not be released. Jacob replied in verse 36, *“Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.”*

Reuben offered the lives of his two sons as surety for the safe return of Benjamin, but this gesture was refused by Jacob. One can only offer the following two reasons. First, Reuben had been passed over as the firstborn because of his incestuous act with Bilhah his father’s concubine; therefore, the father had little esteem for him and did not trust him. Second, it was a test for Judah. Judah would later have the pre-eminence over his brethren and come into the Messianic line. The test was to see whether or not he would fulfil the duties of the firstborn in being willing to lay down his life for his brother (Gen. 43:8-9, 44:14-34).

The Return of the Brothers with Benjamin

43:1-15 – *“And the famine was sore in the land. And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the corn which they had brought out of Egypt, their father said unto them, Go again, buy us a little food. And Judah spake unto him, saying, The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food: But if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down: for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. And Israel said, Wherefore dealt ye so ill with me, as to tell the man whether ye had yet a brother? And they said, The man asked us straitly of our state, and of our kindred, saying, Is your father yet alive? have ye another brother? and we told him according to the tenor of these words: could we certainly know that he would say, Bring your brother down? And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones. I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever: For except we had lingered, surely now we had returned this second time. And their father Israel said unto them, If it must be so now, do this; take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present, a little balm, and a little honey, spices, and myrrh, nuts, and almonds: And take double money in your hand; and the money that was brought again in the mouth of your sacks, carry it again in your hand; peradventure it was an oversight: Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: And God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. And the men took that present, and they took double money in their hand, and Benjamin; and rose up, and went down to Egypt, and stood before Joseph.”*

With the famine intensifying, there was little that Jacob could do but send Benjamin with his other sons down to Egypt again. Jacob accepted *Judah* as surety for his beloved youngest son. Jacob had to put his son on the altar, even as Abraham did with Isaac. Unfortunately, Jacob’s life was bound up in his son Benjamin (Gen. 44:30). Jacob’s sufferings came because his affections were not on the altar.

The brothers took *double money*, as well as a simple gift of balm, honey, spices, myrrh, nuts, and almonds—the fruit of the land. The famine must have been selective with respect to grain crop damage.

43:16-23 – *“And when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the ruler of his house, Bring these men home, and slay, and make ready; for these men shall dine with me at noon. And the man did as Joseph bade; and the man brought the men into Joseph’s house. And the men were afraid,*

because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the first time are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses. And they came near to the steward of Joseph's house, and they communed with him at the door of the house, And said, O sir, we came indeed down at the first time to buy food: And it came to pass, when we came to the inn, that we opened our sacks, and, behold, every man's money was in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight: and we have brought it again in our hand. And other money have we brought down in our hands to buy food: we cannot tell who put our money in our sacks. And he said, Peace be to you, fear not: your God, and the God of your father, hath given you treasure in your sacks: I had your money. And he brought Simeon out unto them."

Upon their arrival, and seeing that Benjamin was with them, Joseph commanded that his brothers eat with him that noon. Fear gripped their hearts as they were brought into his presence, thinking that the money in the mouth of their sacks would be an occasion for Joseph to sell them into slavery. They, therefore, communed with the ruler of Joseph's household, explaining the incident of the money. The ruler spoke words of peace to them and restored Simeon to them.

43:24-32 – *"And the man brought the men into Joseph's house, and gave them water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their asses provender. And they made ready the present against Joseph came at noon: for they heard that they should eat bread there. And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which was in their hand into the house, and bowed themselves to him to the earth. And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive? And they answered, Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive. And they bowed down their heads, and made obeisance. And he lifted up his eyes, and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me? And he said, God be gracious unto thee, my son. And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did yearn upon his brother: and he sought where to weep; and he entered into his chamber, and wept there. And he washed his face, and went out, and refrained himself, and said, Set on bread. And they set on for him by himself, and for them by themselves, and for the Egyptians, which did eat with him, by themselves: because the Egyptians might not eat bread with the Hebrews; for that is an abomination unto the Egyptians."*

Joseph graciously welcomed Benjamin. The seating at the meal is interesting, in that it reveals the customs of those days. As the minister of state and of the priestly class, Joseph had to eat separately, and not with the other Egyptians who were of lower caste and status than himself. Furthermore, the Egyptians would not eat with the Hebrews, for to do so would be defilement, since the Hebrews slaughtered and ate cattle that were sacred to the Egyptians.

43:33-34 – *“And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his youth: and the men marvelled one at another. And he took and sent messes unto them from before him: but Benjamin’s mess was five times so much as any of theirs. And they drank, and were merry with him.”* The seating according to age and birth amazed the sons of Jacob and again filled them with awe, especially at the kindness shown to Benjamin, who was given five times as much, indicative of the favour that he had received in the eyes of Joseph. Five is the number of grace. Joseph had dropped hints all along the way. He was *conditioning* the brethren before he revealed himself to them. He had asked many probing questions to catch up on 22 years of news back at his home (Gen. 43:6-7).

The Testing of Judah

44:1-34 – *“And he commanded the steward of his house, saying, Fill the men’s sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put every man’s money in his sack’s mouth. And put my cup, the silver cup, in the sack’s mouth of the youngest, and his corn money. And he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses. And when they were gone out of the city, and not yet far off, Joseph said unto his steward, Up, follow after the men; and when thou dost overtake them, say unto them, Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby indeed he divineth? ye have done evil in so doing. And he overtook them, and he spake unto them these same words. And they said unto him, Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing: Behold, the money, which we found in our sacks’ mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan: how then should we steal out of thy lord’s house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord’s bondmen. And he said, Now also let it be according unto your words: he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless. Then they speedily took down every man his sack to the ground, and opened every man his sack. And he searched, and began at the eldest, and left at the youngest: and the cup was found in Benjamin’s sack. Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the city. And Judah and his brethren came to Joseph’s house; for he was yet there: and they fell before him on the ground. And Joseph said unto them, What deed is this that ye have done? wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine? And Judah said, What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord’s servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found. And he said, God forbid that I should do so: but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father. Then Judah came near unto him, and said, Oh my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord’s ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant: for thou art even as*

Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, saying, Have ye a father, or a brother? And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one; and his brother is dead, and he alone is left of his mother, and his father loveth him. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Bring him down unto me, that I may set mine eyes upon him. And we said unto my lord, The lad cannot leave his father: for if he should leave his father, his father would die. And thou saidst unto thy servants, Except your youngest brother come down with you, ye shall see my face no more. And it came to pass when we came up unto thy servant my father, we told him the words of my lord. And our father said, Go again, and buy us a little food. And we said, We cannot go down: if our youngest brother be with us, then will we go down: for we may not see the man's face, except our youngest brother be with us. And thy servant my father said unto us, Ye know that my wife bare me two sons: And the one went out from me, and I said, Surely he is torn in pieces; and I saw him not since: And if ye take this also from me, and mischief befall him, ye shall bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. Now therefore when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us; seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life; It shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die: and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bondman to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father."

There still had to be one more test. Judah had to be tried to see if he was worthy to carry on the Messianic line. In a very well conceived plot, Joseph instructed his steward not only to send his brothers away with their sacks full and their money restored to them, but also to put his cup in Benjamin's sack. He then sent his servant in hot pursuit, and caused the brother's sacks to be examined. The cup, of course, was found in Benjamin's sack. When the brothers returned to the house of Joseph, Judah pleaded for Benjamin and offered himself as surety (for life as a bondsman) in place of Benjamin. Thus, Judah passes the test and there is now no further need for Joseph to disguise himself.

Judah prevailed above his brethren (1 Chr. 5:1-2). Reuben had failed in the matter of defiling his father's bed. Simeon and Levi were instruments of cruelty when they slew a whole village.

The Revelation of Joseph to His Brethren

45:1-4 – *"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made*

himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence. And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.”

The brethren were terrified in Joseph’s presence. The revelation that he was Joseph whom they betrayed came as a horrific shock. When the brethren came into Egypt the first time, they did not recognise him, but *only the second time* (Acts 7:9-13). He is a perfect type of Christ here, for only at Christ’s Second Coming will the Jewish brethren recognise their Messiah, though He has already been accepted by the Gentiles.

45:5-7 – *“Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. For these two years hath the famine been in the land: and yet there are five years, in the which there shall neither be earing nor harvest. And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.”*

The kindness with which Joseph revealed himself to his brothers in tolerance and consideration for their situation and state of soul and spirit is surely a model for all generations. Joseph’s concern was that they would not turn their anger upon themselves or be overwhelmed with grief for their dastardly act. He exemplifies the nobility of character of one who has in reality become (as his great grandfather Abraham) a father to many nations.

45:8 – *“So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.”* It is incredible that Joseph, who was only 39 years old at that time, should have entered into the position of fatherhood as the ruler of the land and governor of the nations. In reality, he had assumed this position some nine years earlier when he was taken from prison and put in charge over all of Egypt. Fatherhood precludes thought for self and is concerned only for the needs of the children. In one so young as Joseph, his devotion to duty was both remarkable and highly commendable.

Also, in one so young, Joseph showed a deep understanding and appreciation of the ways of God when he said three times that it was *God* who sent him into the land of Egypt to preserve them and *not his brothers*. He recognised God’s hidden hand behind injustices. Moreover, he understood that injustices are God’s means of promoting men and women to immense blessing. This he repeats in yet another form, which we will address later (Gen. 50:20-21).

45:9-15 – *“Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not: And thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me, thou, and thy children, and thy children’s children, and thy flocks, and thy herds, and all that thou hast: And there will I nourish thee; for yet there are five years of famine; lest thou, and thy household, and all that thou hast, come to poverty. And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin, that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. And ye shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that ye have seen; and ye shall haste and bring down my father hither. And he fell upon his brother Benjamin’s neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept upon his neck. Moreover he kissed all his brethren, and wept upon them: and after that his brethren talked with him.”*

We see Joseph immediately sent for Jacob, his father. Then he explained to his brethren how the famine would continue for another five years. As the brethren were now reconciled and conversing, there was much weeping, because 22 years of emotions had just been unleashed.

Pharaoh’s House Rejoices

45:16 – *“And the fame thereof was heard in Pharaoh’s house, saying, Joseph’s brethren are come: and it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants.”* The news that Joseph’s brethren were come to Egypt reached the ears of Pharaoh and his household, and they were delighted. Herein we see the wisdom of God in the long journey of suffering that Joseph had to endure. It enabled him to be in a position whereby Jacob and his sons would be welcomed and permitted to dwell in the land of Egypt.

They dwelt there by divine will, but they had paid for that privilege through Joseph’s wisdom and his administrative abilities. He had saved Egypt from the famine. This should not be overlooked, because in the justice and judgment of God they had to earn their right to inhabit the best of the land of Goshen.

One of the great truths in life is that nothing is ever free. Our Saviour had to give His all for us. The blood of the Lamb bought our salvation. The Lord also desired us to have the gift of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Although these gifts of new birth and the baptism in the Holy Spirit are freely given, our ability to preach these gospel truths are gained at a very great personal price. This is because we have to experience that which we preach. Preachers, too, have to pay a price for truth for it is written in Proverbs 23:23, “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”

It is through great tribulation that we obtain an eternal inheritance. Therefore, Joseph paid a phenomenal price to enable the children of Israel to dwell in the land of Egypt legitimately. Our inheritance, whether geographical, spiritual, or that which pertains to knowledge, is bought at *a very great price*.

45:17-24 – *“And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; And take your father and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art commanded, this do ye; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours. And the children of Israel did so: and Joseph gave them wagons, according to the commandment of Pharaoh, and gave them provision for the way. To all of them he gave each man changes of raiment; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred pieces of silver, and five changes of raiment. And to his father he sent after this manner; ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way. So he sent his brethren away, and they departed: and he said unto them, See that ye fall not out by the way.”*

Instructions given by Pharaoh himself enabled Joseph’s brothers to take wagons to Canaan, for the transportation of the rest of the family to Egypt, as well as for other provisions. Ten is the number of “law and order.” Everything had been put right with Joseph, and the law had been fulfilled. Benjamin, however, was given 300 pieces of silver. This speaks of the fact that he walked with God.

Also he was given five changes of raiment. Benjamin had received grace in the eyes of God, for he alone among all the brethren was *without fault* in the matter of Joseph’s descent into Egypt. The Lord desires each of His children to be *without fault* when they stand before His throne (Jude 1:24).

Jacob Hears of Joseph’s Fame

45:25-28 – *“And they went up out of Egypt, and came into the land of Canaan unto Jacob their father, And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob’s heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: And Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.”*

Jacob was overwhelmed with the news that Joseph was alive, and his heart fainted momentarily in disbelief. For 22 years he had believed that Joseph was dead. God did not correct him either. This is because God chooses to be silent on certain issues in order to do a special work in our lives.

46:1-2 – *“And Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices unto the God of his father Isaac. And God spake unto Israel in the visions of the night, and said, Jacob, Jacob. And he said, Here am I.”* Now we see God spoke. God has a time to be

silent, and a time to speak (Eccl. 3:7). Jacob (Israel) consented to go down into Egypt, and subsequently God met him in a dream.

46:3-4 – *“And he said, I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.”* In this dream, the Lord gave Jacob direction to leave. This step to leave the land of his inheritance was not to be taken lightly, and in effect required a divine approbation.

The promise to bring Jacob up again could only mean in death, to be buried in the land of his inheritance. However, the fact that the Lord promised to make of him a great nation could also suggest that it referred to the journey of the children of Israel when they made their exodus from Egypt to go to the land of promise under Moses and Joshua.

Israel’s Family Journeys to Egypt

46:5-27 – *“And Jacob rose up from Beersheba: and the sons of Israel carried Jacob their father, and their little ones, and their wives, in the wagons which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. And they took their cattle, and their goods, which they had gotten in the land of Canaan, and came into Egypt, Jacob, and all his seed with him: His sons, and his sons’ sons with him, his daughters, and his sons’ daughters, and all his seed brought he with him into Egypt. And these are the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Reuben, Jacob’s firstborn. And the sons of Reuben; Hanoch, and Phallu, and Hezron, and Carmi. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman. And the sons of Levi; Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the sons of Judah; Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Pharez, and Zarah: but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. And the sons of Pharez were Hezron and Hamul. And the sons of Issachar; Tola, and Phuvah, and Job, and Shimron. And the sons of Zebulun; Sered, and Elon, and Jahleel. These be the sons of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob in Padanaram, with his daughter Dinah: all the souls of his sons and his daughters were thirty and three. And the sons of Gad; Ziphion, and Haggi, Shuni, and Ezbon, Eri, and Arodi, and Areli. And the sons of Asher; Jimnah, and Ishuah, and Isui, and Beriah, and Serah their sister: and the sons of Beriah; Heber, and Malchiel. These are the sons of Zilpah, whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter, and these she bare unto Jacob, even sixteen souls. The sons of Rachel Jacob’s wife; Joseph, and Benjamin. And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. And the sons of Benjamin were Belah, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard. These are the sons of Rachel, which were born to Jacob: all the souls were fourteen. And the sons of Dan; Hushim. And*

the sons of Naphtali; Jahzeel, and Guni, and Jezer, and Shillem. These are the sons of Bilhah, which Laban gave unto Rachel his daughter, and she bare these unto Jacob: all the souls were seven. All the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt, which came out of his loins, besides Jacob's sons' wives, all the souls were threescore and six; And the sons of Joseph, which were born him in Egypt, were two souls: all the souls of the house of Jacob, which came into Egypt, were threescore and ten."

The total number of souls that were taken into Egypt by Jacob is given as 66. Together with the family of Joseph, there were a total of 70 (which is the number of "eldership"). The first 70 included women, pointing to the fact that women can be admitted into the eldership of the Church. It should be noted here that the list of 70 does not mean that they were born prior to the descent of Jacob into Egypt.

In Acts 7:14, 75 souls are mentioned, and in Deuteronomy 10:22, 70 souls are mentioned. However, when we look at Numbers 26:40, Ard and Naaman are listed as grandsons of Benjamin; therefore, they must have been born *after* the descent into Egypt. This by no means detracts from the spiritual truth relative to elders that we have mentioned, since Middle Eastern nations have a different method of compilation of genealogies.

The Reuniting of Jacob and Joseph

46:28-34 – *"And he sent Judah before him unto Joseph, to direct his face unto Goshen; and they came into the land of Goshen. And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive. And Joseph said unto his brethren, and unto his father's house, I will go up, and show Pharaoh, and say unto him, My brethren, and my father's house, which were in the land of Canaan, are come unto me; And the men are shepherds, for their trade hath been to feed cattle; and they have brought their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have. And it shall come to pass, when Pharaoh shall call you, and shall say, What is your occupation? That ye shall say, Thy servants' trade hath been about cattle from our youth even until now, both we, and also our fathers: that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."*

Even at this juncture we see *the emergence of Judah* as the leader and the one who would eventually have the pre-eminence over his brethren. Jacob sent Judah before him to meet Joseph to receive instructions to direct him into the land of Goshen. Joseph gave instructions to his father and brothers to tell Pharaoh that they were shepherds, so that the Egyptians (who despised such a lowly caste) would then permit them to live separately in the land of Goshen, thereby conserving their worship, and not intermingling with or marrying the Egyptians.

The Presentation Before Pharaoh of Jacob and the Brothers

47:1-6 – *“Then Joseph came and told Pharaoh, and said, My father and my brethren, and their flocks, and their herds, and all that they have, are come out of the land of Canaan; and, behold, they are in the land of Goshen. And he took some of his brethren, even five men, and presented them unto Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen. And Pharaoh spake unto Joseph, saying, Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee: The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell: and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle.”*

Because of the spotless testimony of Joseph, Jacob and the brothers obtained favour in the sight of Pharaoh, who gave them the best of the land of Egypt in which to sojourn. Moreover, Pharaoh instructed that those who were men of activity were to be placed over his own cattle. Here we would do well to pause since, throughout Scripture, this has been one of the virtues for which rulers seek. Rulers are always looking for those whom they may place in positions of authority, who will be trustworthy and faithful. We read in 1 Kings 11:28, “And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.”

47:7-10 – *“And Joseph brought in Jacob his father, and set him before Pharaoh: and Jacob blessed Pharaoh. And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How old art thou? And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage. And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.”*

After Jacob blessed Pharaoh, he gave his testimony—which we believe to be very revealing of a man who was first a deceiver, then a prince with God and a righteous man. His third name, Jeshurun (Deut. 33:26), means “righteous or straightened one.”

Jacob was 130 when he appeared before Pharaoh. Although Jacob lived another 17 years after this meeting with Pharaoh, nevertheless he did not attain unto the years of his fathers, Abraham (175) and Isaac (180).

He lived 17 years in Egypt. Seventeen signifies the perfection of order (7+10). He was there just the right amount of time, no more, no less. His analysis that his days were “few and evil” emphasises the fact that his was a lifetime of discipline and hardship. This was required to purify him of the deceitfulness that was so deeply ingrained within his being.

It is interesting that Jacob blessed Pharaoh twice, not thrice, as is normal in the life of a saint who receives a triple blessing from the Lord for body, soul, and spirit. As Christians we should desire the three anointings of David, which correspond to the Outer Court, Holy Place, and Holy of Holies in the tabernacle. These also answer to the three principal feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles (or salvation, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the last day outpouring or the double portion blessing).

47:11-12 – *“And Joseph placed his father and his brethren, and gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded. And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father’s household, with bread, according to their families.”* The children of Israel settled in the land of Goshen, where Rameses was the royal residence. Here Joseph nourished his father and his brethren.

The Famine Takes Hold of the Land

47:13-21 – *“And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine. And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, for the corn which they bought: and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh’s house. And when money failed in the land of Egypt, and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came unto Joseph, and said, Give us bread: for why should we die in thy presence? for the money faileth. And Joseph said, Give your cattle; and I will give you for your cattle, if money fail. And they brought their cattle unto Joseph: and Joseph gave them bread in exchange for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year. When that year was ended, they came unto him the second year, and said unto him, We will not hide it from my lord, how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle; there is not ought left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies, and our lands: Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live, and not die, that the land be not desolate. And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh’s. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof.”*

The famine enriched Pharaoh and made him a virtual despot, since the Egyptians sold all their money, land, and themselves to Pharaoh in exchange for food. Joseph had complete authority over the people; they actually belonged to him. He bought them in the name of Pharaoh. Joseph had risen from being a slave in prison to being the greatest and most prosperous man in his generation.

47:22-26 – *“Only the land of the priests bought he not; for the priests had a portion assigned them of Pharaoh, and did eat their portion which Pharaoh gave them: wherefore they sold not their lands. Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase, that ye shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own, for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your households, and for food for your little ones. And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh’s servants. And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt unto this day, that Pharaoh should have the fifth part; except the land of the priests only, which became not Pharaoh’s.”*

In this arrangement, whereby the peasants ceased to be landowners, there seems to be a method developed for the equitable distribution of the land. Joseph moved them into cities and neighbourhoods so that in case of future famines provision would be made for their care and sustenance.

Interestingly, this did come to pass, and continued through many generations. Heroditus and Strabo confirm it in their commentaries on the life in Egypt. They declare that Pharaoh gave unto everyone a square piece of land the size of his hereditary possession during those times. It appears that it was not until the reign of Pharaoh Sethos (who was a contemporary of Hezekiah, 1,000 years later) that this system ceased. The priests were exempted and given an allowance by Pharaoh, whilst the common folk were obliged to give a fifth of all future produce to Pharaoh. Since the land normally yielded thirty fold, this was not an oppressive tax.

The Last Days of Jacob

47:27-31 – *“And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly. And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was an hundred forty and seven years. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt: But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their buryingplace. And he said, I will do as thou hast said. And he said, Swear unto me. And he sware unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed’s head.”*

In the land that Pharaoh gave them, the Lord prospered them and they multiplied exceedingly. However, at the time when Jacob was due to die, his heart was set upon the land that the Lord had promised to his fathers, Abraham, and Isaac. Therefore, he exacted a promise from Joseph to be buried in the land of their inheritance.

The Blessing of Manasseh and Ephraim

48:1-4 – *“And it came to pass after these things, that one told Joseph, Behold, thy father is sick: and he took with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. And one told Jacob, and said, Behold, thy son Joseph cometh unto thee: and Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. And Jacob said unto Joseph, God Almighty appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me, And said unto me, Behold, I will make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, and I will make of thee a multitude of people; and will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession.”*

Prefacing his blessing of the two sons of Joseph, Jacob recounted the promises God had given him. We feel that this is a very wholesome practice for us to do as well. As we rehearse the promises that the Lord has made to us, it will surprise us how many promises the Lord has already fulfilled; and this will bring such confidence to our inner man.

48:5-6 – *“And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. And thy issue, which thou begetteth after them, shall be thine, and shall be called after the name of their brethren in their inheritance.”* Jacob then declares that the two sons of Joseph shall be as Reuben and Simeon, the two eldest sons of Jacob, indicating that they would supplant them and receive an inheritance which should be called after their names. (Reuben and Simeon both lost their birthrights.)

Simeon never received any certain geographical land for an inheritance, and Reuben settled on the wrong side of Jordan. The two sons of Joseph did indeed receive a considerable inheritance in the land of Israel, and Ephraim became the head of the ten northern tribes. It is also noteworthy that Joseph was given a portion of the firstborn, in that he received a double portion in Israel by having two tribes—Ephraim and Manasseh.

A Final Lesson

48:7-18 – *“And as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died by me in the land of Canaan in the way, when yet there was but a little way to come unto Ephrath: and I buried her there in the way of Ephrath; the same is Bethlehem. And Israel beheld Joseph’s sons, and said, Who are these? And*

Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them. And Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath showed me also thy seed. And Joseph brought them out from between his knees, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth. And Joseph took them both, Ephraim in his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh in his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought them near unto him. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head, who was the younger, and his left hand upon Manasseh's head, guiding his hands wittingly; for Manasseh was the firstborn. And he blessed Joseph, and said, God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth. And when Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand upon the head of Ephraim, it displeased him: and he held up his father's hand, to remove it from Ephraim's head unto Manasseh's head. And Joseph said unto his father, Not so, my father: for this is the firstborn; put thy right hand upon his head."

At this point, Jacob was about to die; his eyes were dim. He wanted to lay hands on the two sons and prophesy over each one. Therefore, Joseph presented his two sons to Jacob, carefully bringing the firstborn Manasseh toward Jacob's right hand, and Ephraim the younger toward his left hand. (There is a greater blessing in the right hand.) When Jacob stretched out his right hand and laid it upon the younger, Joseph protested. He thought his father was making a mistake, but Jacob knew exactly what he was doing.

48:19-20 – *"And his father refused, and said, I know it, my son, I know it: he also shall become a people, and he also shall be great: but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations. And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh."* Jacob explained that he was well aware that he was laying his right hand upon the younger, and the left hand upon the older. He set Ephraim before Manasseh. The gift of prophecy operated by faith (Heb. 11:20-21).

God was showing Jacob on his deathbed that all the conniving to take the blessing away from his older brother Esau had all been very foolish and unnecessary. His father, Isaac, could have simply received revelation from the Lord and given the blessing to him instead of Esau. All of Jacob's suffering and wasted years could have been averted if only Jacob and his mother had been truthful and upright. Sometimes an individual learns more on his deathbed than everything he learned throughout his whole lifetime.

48:21-22 – *“And Israel said unto Joseph, Behold, I die: but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers. Moreover I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow.”* As Israel was ready to die, he promised prophetically that God would bring them into the land of Canaan, the land of their inheritance. To Joseph he affirmed the birthright (a double portion), an extra portion of land in Canaan. In the body of Christ today there are certain ones who are firstborn among their brethren. They have a double portion of the Spirit as Elisha had (2 Ki. 2:9-15).

The Prophetic Enunciations of Jacob upon His Sons

49:1-2 – *“And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days. Gather yourselves together, and hear, ye sons of Jacob; and hearken unto Israel your father.”* Throughout this chapter, Jacob prophesied over each of his sons. Each son grew into a tribe, and every tribe had a different call, vision, and promises. This makes a very interesting study. They represent not only different individuals, but also different tribes or families in the Church. Follow the history of each son of Israel from the time of his birth to the position of his tribe in eternity in the Book of Revelation.

Following the History of the Twelve Tribes (From Birth to Their Place in New Jerusalem)

- Their Birth (Gen. 29-30; 35:18)—the mothers who bare them, and the circumstances
- Their Personal Lives and Decisions (Gen. 29-50)—how they either qualified, or disqualified themselves from God’s best
- The Prophecies Jacob Pronounced Over Each One (Gen. 49)
- Levi receives the priesthood (Ex. 32) God chose the tribe of Levi instead of the firstborn out of every tribe (Num. 3:12, 3:45)
- The Arrangement of the Tribes Around the Tabernacle (Num. 2)
- The Prophetic Blessings of Moses Over the 12 Tribes (Deut. 33)
- The Geographical Inheritance in the Land for Each Tribe (Josh. 13)—some tribes were closer to Zion than others. Dan was as far north as possible. Gad, Reuben, and half of Manasseh settled outside of Canaan, on the wrong side of Jordan.
- Their Response to Various Revivals (Chronicles, Kings)
- Their Positions in the Land of Israel During the Millennium (Ezek. 47-48)
- The 12 Gates in New Jerusalem in Heaven (Rev. 21:12)—Each gate is named after one of the 12 patriarchs. Each tribe goes into the city through its own gate.

Even as Israel was made up of different tribes or families, so is the Church. The Church is made of spiritual tribes (or denominations), each having its own particular emphasis. People are on different spiritual levels or plateaus. Some are content to dwell on the wrong side of Jordan, far from Zion's holy mountain, as long as they are blessed materially. Others are all out for God and have sharper vision. Although each tribe in the Old Testament was different, they were all of the house of faith.

General Summary of the Tribes

1. Each tribe had its own identities and distinct characteristics.
2. Each tribe had its strengths and weaknesses.
3. Each tribe had a different call, a different purpose to fulfil, and a different destiny.
4. Each tribe was positioned in different proximities to Mount Zion. This was true, not only in the land of Canaan, but also in New Jerusalem. Some were more devout than others.
5. Some tribes ranked higher than others because of the mothers who birthed them. Rachel and Leah were more spiritual than the handmaids. A mother speaks of a church out of which we are born and nourished. Dan was born because of envy. Joseph was born because of a cry to God.
6. Some tribes lost eternal blessings (for example, Reuben and Simeon) because of choices and decisions they made. The father of each tribe made certain responses to God. Their responses affected the destinies of each tribe.

49:3-4 – *“Reuben, thou art my firstborn, my might, and the beginning of my strength, the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power: Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.”* As stated earlier, Reuben was the firstborn, but lost the right of the firstborn (the double portion) because he had committed incest with his father's concubine. He was as unstable as water. People who are immoral are also very unstable.

Reuben did not excel because of instability. Earthly possessions and prosperity were his chief concerns. A patriarch has a tremendous influence on his seed to come. This man and his tribe had short-range vision. Few (if any) notable leaders came from the tribe of Reuben. After coming out of Egypt many years later, the tribe of Reuben did not wish to enter into the land of Canaan, but dwelt on the other side of Jordan because it was a good place for cattle.

49:5-7 – *“Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel.”*

Simeon and Levi were linked together because they joined forces in their cruelty towards Hamor and Shechem (Gen. 34). Their anger and self-will brought them low. Let us ask God to cleanse us of these two evils. As a punishment, they did not receive clearly delineated inheritance in Israel. They were divided and scattered throughout the lands of the other tribes. Simeon, as a tribe, never amounted to much. The tribe of Levi redeemed themselves many years later when they stood on the Lord's side with Moses (Ex. 32:26-28). This time they used the sword for righteousness. They became the tribe of priests, yet they had no earthly inheritance. God reserved a far greater inheritance for them—the Lord Himself.

49:8-12 – *“Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.”*

Although the birthright belonged to Joseph, the chief ruler (or Messiah) was to come from Judah, the one whom others would praise (1 Chr. 5:1-2). A sceptre is a symbol of rulership. The rule of kings started with King David who was of the tribe of Judah. (Saul was a Benjamite and was destined to fail.) Although the kings ceased to rule with the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., the royal genealogy continued until the King of kings, the Lord Jesus Christ came (Lk. 1:32-33), and He inherited the throne of His [fore] father David.

In heaven Jesus is known as the “Lion of the tribe of Judah; the root of David” (Rev. 5:5). A young lion is known for agility and grace, an older lion, for strength and majesty. These are seen in the tribe of Judah and in Christ. From Judah came the Lawgiver, who also is the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Until Shiloh come.” Shiloh was the place of the ark (Josh. 18:1), the place of God's presence. Shiloh is taken to mean “when Messiah shall come, unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

“Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine.” The vine is Christ. This is symbolic of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Judah wrapped himself around that vine; therefore, Judah would remain fruitful. The finest wine of Israel is found in the territory of Judah. Wine is symbolic of the fruit of the Spirit. Thus we must bind our life to the Vine in order to be fruitful.

Christ came from Bethlehem, which is in the land of Judah. As we mentioned earlier, the throne and Messianic call were given to Judah. This was granted when he proved himself faithful in his defense of Benjamin, and also in light of his righteous acknowledgment of his improper actions towards Tamar his daughter-in-law (Gen. 38:26).

49:13 – *“Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon.”* Zebulun speaks spiritually of those who are a shelter to others who are going through the storms of life. What a blessed ministry to succour and give rest to those who are at times at their wits’ end (Ps. 107:23-30).

49:14-15 – *“Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute.”* Spiritually, Issachar speaks of those who have a *servant* attitude. At the same time, they are *not* content to be passive or to accept a lower spiritual level. These men of Issachar press on in God. In 1 Chronicles 12:32, the men of this tribe had an understanding of the times; therefore, in crisis they knew what direction to give Israel.

49:16-18 – *“Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. I have waited for thy salvation, O LORD.”* Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel, but he was a serpent. Dan was born out of jealousy and envy, and his fruit was not good. Later he gave himself over to idols. A person who is like Dan could preach on holiness, but be like a serpent in his heart. An adder is hard to detect; you cannot see it. This tribe does not figure in the list of the 12 tribes in Revelation chapter 7. Dan will be replaced by one of the tribes of Joseph. Judas was also the thirteenth apostle of Jesus; he was apostate.

49:19 – *“Gad, a troop shall overcome him: but he shall overcome at the last.”* The prophet Elijah came from this tribe, from the territory of Gilead. Gad was overcome at first, but in the end he was the victor. Gad represents people like the Apostle Peter, who tend to waver at the beginning but finish strong.

49:20 – *“Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties.”* Asher speaks of those who prepare the most satisfying spiritual food for the saints, food that is worthy of the Lord Himself. This spiritual food is often in the form of a writing ministry.

49:21 – *“Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words.”* Naphtali typifies those who have a word in season for the weary, words of encouragement and hope (Isa. 50:4), true words that cleanse and purify those to whom they are given (Jn. 15:3).

49:22-26 – “Joseph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren.”

Joseph was hated and attacked vehemently by his brothers and others. The injustices done to him brought him into exile, prison, and disgrace. However, Jacob was strengthened by God, and eventually received innumerable blessings. These blessings are the result of what we, too, will receive when we *endure* many fierce assaults that come against us, and refuse to give up.

Another important point to bear in mind is that Joseph was made separate from his brethren, and is known as being tremendously fruitful (Ps. 80:8-11). Sometimes we have to live a very separated life in order to be fruitful. Boughs represent sons and daughters, or people we have influenced, who go into other countries to preach the gospel. They are an extension of our life and ministry. These branches bring us an inheritance among the nations, even in places we ourselves have never been.

49:27 – “Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.” Jacob was certainly guided by the spirit of prophecy rather than natural affection; he would have spoken with more tenderness of his beloved son Benjamin with the latter. The spirit of prophecy foresaw that Benjamin’s posterity would be a warlike tribe, strong, very daring, and that they would enrich themselves with the spoils of their enemies. The Benjamites ravened like wolves when they desperately espoused the cause of the evil men of Gibeah (Jdg. 20:14-48). Nearly the whole tribe was wiped out during the time of the Judges.

Both King Saul and Saul of Tarsus were from the tribe of Benjamin. King Saul was certainly a ravening wolf. Saul of Tarsus, in the morning of his life “*devoured the prey*” as a persecutor, but in the evening of his life “*divided the spoil*” as a minister of the gospel.

49:28-33 – “All these are the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them; every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, In the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the

land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people.”

After pronouncing the blessings upon the 12 tribes, Jacob gave commandment to bury him with Abraham, Isaac, and their wives, along with Leah his first wife. Leah received the best burial, next to Jacob. Rachel was in Bethlehem. From Leah came Judah and the Christ. When Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he pulled himself up into bed, and died.

We must not die before God has accomplished His purposes in and through our lives. It is important to pray that God will save us from a premature death, and that He will give us a willingness to die in His time (Eccl. 3:2). Remember, Christ said, “Mine hour is not yet come” (Jn. 2:4). Do not die before your time.

The Burial of Jacob

50:1-14 – *“And Joseph fell upon his father’s face, and wept upon him, and kissed him. And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to embalm his father: and the physicians embalmed Israel. And forty days were fulfilled for him; for so are fulfilled the days of those which are embalmed: and the Egyptians mourned for him threescore and ten days. And when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spake unto the house of Pharaoh, saying, If now I have found grace in your eyes, speak, I pray you, in the ears of Pharaoh, saying, My father made me swear, saying, Lo, I die: in my grave which I have digged for me in the land of Canaan, there shalt thou bury me. Now therefore let me go up, I pray thee, and bury my father, and I will come again. And Pharaoh said, Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear. And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father’s house: only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen: and it was a very great company. And they came to the threshingfloor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days. And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning in the floor of Atad, they said, This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians: wherefore the name of it was called Abelmizraim, which is beyond Jordan. And his sons did unto him according as he commanded them: For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham*

bought with the field for a possession of a buryingplace of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre. And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren, and all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father.”

Israel is the first record we have of a person being embalmed. Egypt’s whole outlook was one of death; they were the world’s best embalmers. They specialised in the pyramids, which are tombs. Egypt speaks of the world, and the world’s end is death and hell.

The Egyptians mourned for 70 days. Seventy is the number of “eldership,” and signified that Jacob was certainly an elder of his nation.

The cortege from Egypt up to Hebron was worthy of a king; such was the funeral that was accorded Jacob. Of course he was a king in every sense of the word, for from his sons was not only the ruler of Egypt, but also the royal line of David, leading to the Messiah, the King Himself.

The Last Days of Joseph

50:15-21 – *“And when Joseph’s brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants. And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.”*

Joseph was 56 years old when his father died. Immediately after the death of Jacob, Joseph’s brethren became fearful and asked that he would forgive them. Joseph then made a statement that we would do well to understand. He basically said, “Vengeance belongs to God, not to me.” Until we are able to see the hidden hand of God behind injustices, we will never have the victory, and we will always fight back with vengeance.

Thus Joseph considered the evil that his brethren had perpetrated upon him God’s method by which he was to go down into Egypt to become the saviour of his brethren, as well as the nourisher of thousands from many other countries (Gen. 45:5-8). We, too, should see the evil treatment that

we receive at the hands of others as merely the means whereby God carries forward His plans for our lives. Moreover, when we are elevated, we must still have the forgiving and kind spirit that Joseph manifested, when those who have hurt us ask for our forgiveness.

Joseph had to suffer vicariously for his brethren in order to save them. One had to suffer for the others. As we go on in our walk with the Lord, He will lead us into vicarious suffering. Paul declared, “Death works in us but life in you” (2 Cor. 4:12). Therefore, we should be good to those who spitefully use us, that our persecutors might become foreordained children of our Heavenly Father.

The Death of Joseph

50:22-26 – *“And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father’s house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years. And Joseph saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph’s knees. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.”*

In his dying days, Joseph was a man filled with faith. He prophesied, “*God will surely visit you.*” I believe this is a promise to the Church, too. He declared that the Lord would surely visit His people Israel and bring them forth out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, and he gave commandment for his bones to be taken up when they left. In reality, there were only three men of those who left Egypt at the time of Exodus who entered into the Promised Land—Joshua, Caleb, and the bones of Joseph.

Joseph’s bones were a witness that he believed. Those bones went through the Red Sea, camped at Sinai, crossed Jordan, and were buried in the land of inheritance at the foot of Mount Ebal near Jacob’s well. Surely that which Paul wrote concerning Abel was true of Joseph when he stated, “He being dead yet speaketh” (Heb. 11:4b). Throughout the wilderness journey the bones of Joseph continually spoke to the Israelites, if they had only had an ear to hear.

The ministry of Joseph was not only to feed a desperate generation, but it was also to “bind [Pharaoh’s] princes at his pleasure; and to teach his senators [or elders] wisdom” (Ps. 105:22). A major part of Joseph’s ministry was to show forth the wisdom of the Lord. Wisdom is the principal thing in life (Prov. 4:7). The glory of God comes upon wisdom. Spiritually, we are to bind

principalities and powers (Ps. 149:8-9), and to teach the people wisdom. We can see in the life of Joseph the dual ministries of prophet and teacher.

After Joseph's death, the Israelites remained several hundred years more in Egypt, and grew into a multitude of around 2,000,000 people. The Egyptians imposed slavery upon them, and God raised up Moses to deliver them. Altogether they were in the land of Egypt four generations (Gen. 15:13-16), as God had told Abraham 430 years before.

Conclusion

The Book of Genesis lays the foundation for all future study of God's Word. It clearly shows the beginnings of the nation of Israel, which is a type of the Church. Therefore, reference can be made to this Book to understand many spiritual truths that govern the life not only of the Church, but also of each individual believer.

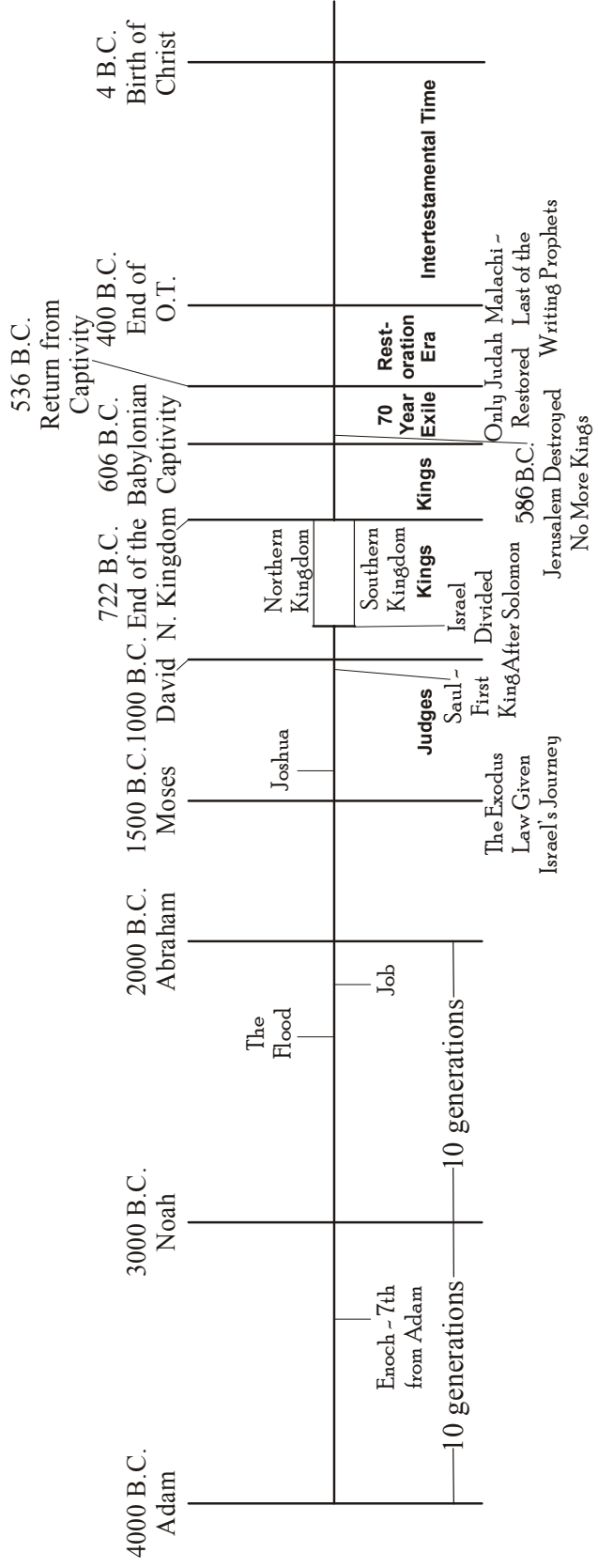
Abraham is our spiritual father, and we enter into many of his testings and trials during our lifetime to mould us to become truly his sons and daughters. Thus, Abraham, as well as Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph are role models for all of God's children.

The great cataclysmic event of the Flood has many lessons for us, who are living in the Last Days. All told, many events in Genesis give us understanding of those things that are shortly to come to pass on the earth, including the violence and corruption of the human race.

The life of Noah portrays the life of believers in the Last Days who, through a singular stance for righteousness, will shine like the stars forever in eternity, for which we should all zealously prepare ourselves.

Therefore, the study of this, the First Book in Holy Scripture, instructs us in the way everlasting by avoiding the evil and cleaving to that which is good. In so doing, we will sit down with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the Great Supper of the Lamb.

Survey of the Old Testament



Babylonian Captivity:
 There were 3 separate invasions:
 1. 606 B.C.
 2. 597 B.C.
 3. 586 B.C.
 The southern kingdom of Judah returned from exile in 536 B.C.

Prophets:

- 1000 - 722 B.C. - Writing Prophets - Hosea, Jonah, Joel, Micah, Amos, Isaiah
- 1000 - 722 B.C. - Non-Writing Prophets - Elijah, Elisha, Others
- 722 - 606 B.C. - Writing Prophets - Isaiah, Obadiah, Nahum, Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah
- 606 - 536 B.C. - Writing Prophets - Ezekiel, Daniel
- 536 - 400 B.C. - Writing Prophets - Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Books by Dr. Brian J. Bailey:

Commentaries on Books of the Bible

Genesis	Minor Prophets 1 (Hosea)
Feasts and Offerings (Leviticus)	Minor Prophets 2 (Joel - Zephaniah)
The Book of Judges	Minor Prophets 3 (Haggai - Malachi)
The Gentile Bride of Christ (Ruth)	The Gospel of Matthew
The Restoration Era (Ezra & Nehemiah)	The Gospel of Mark
The Three Houses of Esther	The Gospel of Luke
Psalms I	The Gospel of John
Psalms II	More than Conquerors (Romans)
Psalms III	Soldiers for Christ (Ephesians)
The Bride (Song of Solomon)	Hitting the Mark (Philippians)
Isaiah	Colossians & Philemon
Jeremiah	Within the Veil (Hebrews)
The Book of Lamentations	The Two Wisdoms (James)
The Chariot Throne of God (Ezekiel)	The Epistles of John
Daniel	The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Revelation)

Topical Studies

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The Tabernacle of Moses	The Comforter (The Holy Spirit)
David and Solomon	Pillars of Faith
Leadership	The Ministry of the Prophet
Names of God	Teachers of Righteousness
The Life of Christ	The Second Coming

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